

# HARRY TRUMAN:

## *PRESIDENT*

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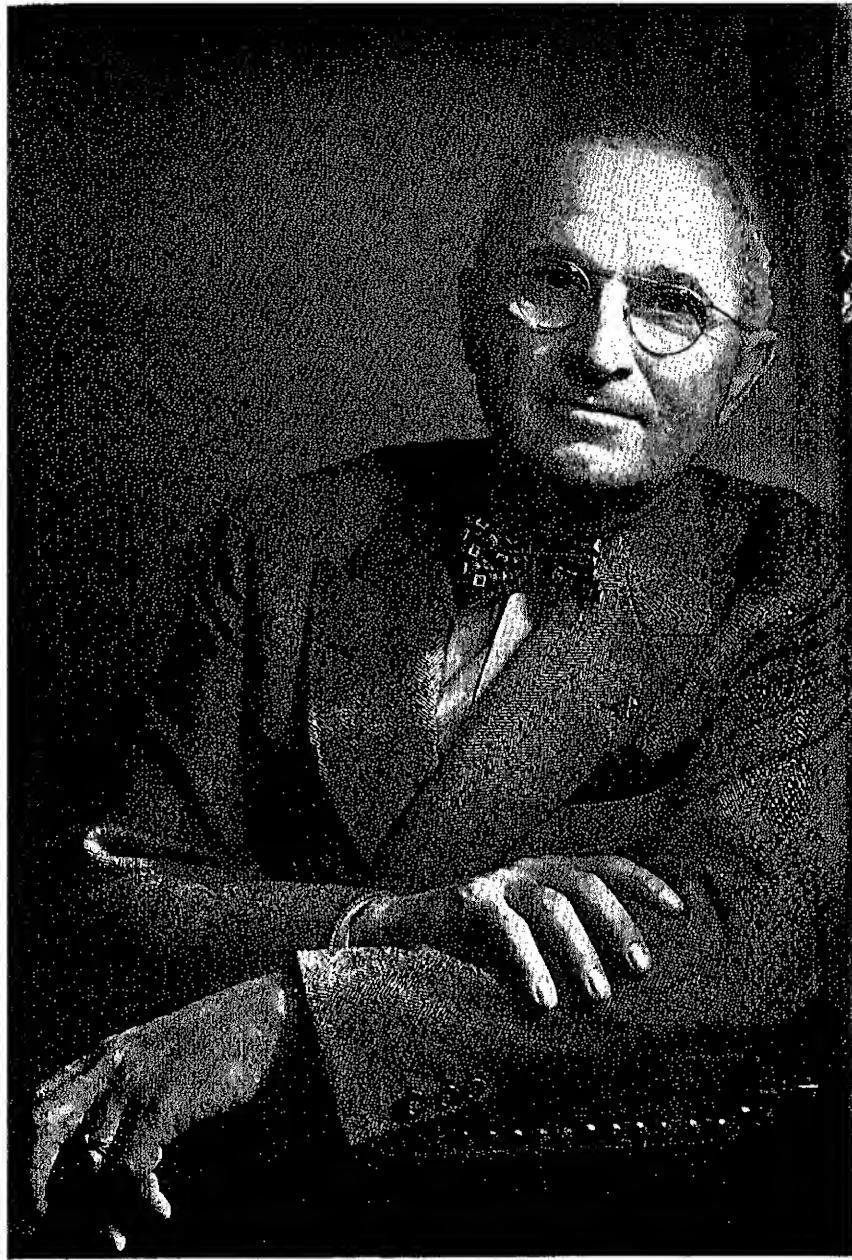
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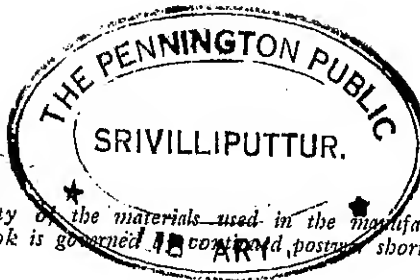
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# CONTENTS

## *Part I*

### TRUMAN TAKES OFFICE

I SHOCK—ROOSEVELT'S DEATH	3
II FRICTION WITH CONGRESS	9

## *Part II*

### INTERNATIONAL CRISIS

III GROPING FOR PEACE	19
IV MOSCOW'S BITTER FRUITS	35
V FAR EASTERN TANGLE	61
VI TOWARD A FIRM POLICY	77
VII THE ATOMIC BOMB	101

## *Part III*

### DOMESTIC CONFLICT

VIII LABOR PAINS	127
IX "TO ERR IS TRUMAN"	141
X TRUMAN STRIKES BACK	157
XI EIGHTIETH CONGRESS	166
XII THE TAX VETOES	175
XIII THE TAFT-HARTLEY BILL	188
XIV FOREIGN TRADE?	195
XV HIGH COST OF LIVING	201
XVI THE HOUSING FIASCO	210



*Part IV*

## THIS MAN TRUMAN

XVII PATCHWORK OF ASSOCIATES	219
XVIII "MR. MISSOURI"	238
XIX "FLYING PRESIDENT"	246
XX EVALUATION	253
<i>Index</i>	265

*Part I*

**TRUMAN TAKES OFFICE**



## CHAPTER ONE

### SHOCK—ROOSEVELT'S DEATH

**N**O OTHER President in American history had died in the midst of a war. Never before had the nation been involved in armed conflict of such immensity. The scope and projection of military operations at the very hour of Franklin D. Roosevelt's death would stagger the mind and imagination of an ordinary man. Harry Truman never claimed to be anything but an ordinary man.

As the new President was sworn in by Chief Justice of the United States Harlan F. Stone, American and British armies in Western Europe smashed along the line of the Elbe River, while the Russian divisions to the east pinched to the Oder, leaving only a narrow segment of Germany to be conquered. Berlin itself was in the jaws of a Russian encirclement, as American-British spearheads of infantry and armor thrust a many pronged fork into the vitals of the remnant of Hitler's Third Reich.

In the Pacific, the war was far from over.

True, United States forces were landing in the Philippines, and a thousand combat ships of the fleet had won practical mastery of the Pacific. Japan herself, except for the great, devastating B-29 air raids, was practically untouched. There were four million Japanese under arms, another two million in reserve. The deadly battle for Okinawa was under way, a bitter contest in the willingness to stand and die for every inch of ground. Kamikaze (suicide) attacks were exacting a heavy toll of combat and transport shipping.

Naval officers quietly offered the opinion at this time that the war with Japan would last at least another sixteen months and cost upwards of a million casualties before the empire itself could be invaded and subjugated. The keenest military minds—MacArthur, Nimitz, Halsey, Marshall—were preparing desperately

for mounting the great attacks on the Japanese homeland—in operations *Olympic*, the assault on the south of the Empire; and *Coronet*, the grand drive into Tokyo and the heart of Japanese resistance in the pay-off punch of the war.

Other forces, unseen and greater than the immensity of such military planning—greater even than the immensity of global warfare—were to manifest themselves. The world, without knowing it, stood on the threshold of a new era. Eighty-five days after Truman became President, in one blinding flash at Alamogordo, New Mexico, the world shed a concept of basic law evolved throughout the life of man, and stepped into the atomic age.

The secret, for military reasons, was not at once announced. But the past was sealed off as effectively as if by an impenetrable curtain, and there was no guidepost or dependable blueprint for the future.

As Chairman of the Senate National Defense Investigating Committee, Harry Truman had gained comprehensive and specialized knowledge of America's war effort. He had worked harder at that job than any he had ever held before. He had studied every page of the voluminous sworn record. War reports and memoranda of the most secret nature passed across his desk. He presided at private meetings with generals, admirals, factory managers, labor bosses, and others supervising the management of the war. Hugh Fulton, the committee's brilliant Chief Counsel, kept Truman abreast of all developments and advised on the most effective remedial action.

The powerful, nonpartisan Truman Committee resolved some of the nation's greatest war problems. It wrote a unique chapter in Congressional history by successfully policing a program which grew to a size almost beyond human comprehension. Senator Truman, the committee's leader, came to be regarded as a fearless critic, experienced in government and the civilian next to Roosevelt who "knew most about the war."

It was this reputation which primarily qualified Truman as Roosevelt's fourth-term running mate. In truth, Truman was in many ways better qualified than Roosevelt himself had been when

he entered the White House from the Governorship of New York in 1932.

On the other hand, the Truman Committee had wisely refrained from setting itself up as a committee on the conduct of the war. It never sought to determine military strategy or tactics. It did not attempt to pass on the selection of commanders in the field, nor the disposition of troops and munitions. It recognized, moreover, that Franklin Roosevelt, as President and Commander-in-chief, must not be hampered in his efforts to prosecute the war vigorously.

The problems and responsibilities that pressed with such staggering complexity upon Harry Truman, as the new president, were those linked in the global chain reaction of marching men, power politics, and the revolutionary rush of events.

The exigencies of war fostered the assumption of primary authority in the hands of the Big Three leaders. However, for the United States, Roosevelt had served largely as his own Secretary of State. He made private plans and engineered personal commitments to be divulged at a time that seemed to him most propitious. This could not but hamper his successor.

Then Truman was victim of a singular weakness of the American government. The peculiar anomaly of the Vice-presidency not only denies its titleholder to full-fledged membership in the administrative branch but deprives him also of virtually any authority in the United States Senate over which he must preside.

Vice-president Truman knew but a smattering of confidential administration plans. Roosevelt had held no long conferences to acquaint him with diplomatic responsibilities and developments. As an ex-officio member, Truman sat in on Cabinet meetings, but these had become largely routine affairs.

Truman had never served on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The delicate shading of foreign diplomacy was not his primary interest, although he had voted consistently for national defense and treaty policies. He had only speaking acquaintance with members of the diplomatic corps and that only in the occasional hurly-burly of official receptions and cocktail parties.

The Dumbarton Oaks conference had been held to iron out initial differences in drafts of the United Nations Charter. The San Francisco conference was on the eve of meeting to draw up the actual charter of a binding world document. The man who had led the nation to the threshold of victory and had guided these initial approaches to international agreement was gone. The misgivings he had, the dangers he perceived ahead, the immense strain of future international crisis he sensed—these he was not to reveal.

The day Roosevelt died, Truman did not know that he had inherited not so much the Presidency of the United States as world leadership against other aggressive forces. As he left the Executive Mansion for his private apartment to sleep after being sworn in, Truman felt only that he had been loaded with an insurmountable burden. Hundreds still lingered in Lafayette Park, opposite the White House. For the most part the crowd was silent, stricken. Several servicemen leaned on crutches and fought back the tears. A shabbily dressed woman fingered her rosary beads. She said simply, "I thought he would live always. They can never replace him." A cool wind brushed the fresh spring grass. A radio could be heard faintly, broadcasting a funeral hymn.

To many it seemed the world could no longer go on. President Roosevelt was dead. No matter what they say of a President while he is living, the American people will accord him a great measure of public deification upon his death. Franklin Roosevelt, in twelve years, had probably excited deeper passions of adulation and hate than any man in United States history.

The solitary loneliness of the office of President engulfed the new Chief Executive. This feeling drove Harry Truman, on his first day as President, to go back to the Senate, to have lunch with his old friends.

It was the same feeling that led him to start to walk back directly upon the Senate floor, unannounced and unheralded. This was something of a ludicrous gesture. No President had ever contemplated such a thing before. Truman did not realize its unorthodoxy or its significance. The shock he felt was so great he

had not then realized—nor was he to realize for many months—the tremendous fact that his person, his mind, and his heart had become, literally, one of the three coordinate branches of American government.

A modest, warm-hearted man, Truman seemed incapable of realizing, at first, the new role he must play. Kindly officials, including Secretary of the Senate Leslie L. Biffle, stopped him at the doors of the chamber that day, barring his entrance.

"Don't you realize," Biffle insisted, "you can't do this? You are the President!"

More than two years later Biffle urged that the same gesture was in order. President Truman did appear on the Senate floor, though not on a "dare" as the press reported. He was greeted warmly by the Republican majority.

It became almost an obsession with Truman that he never wanted to be President. He thought that other men had probably been more worthy. He had gone to the 1944 Democratic convention in Chicago prepared to help nominate James F. Byrnes for Vice-president. His first choice had been Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House, but when Rayburn told him that a political split in the Texas delegation nullified his availability, Truman turned to Byrnes. Events—a deep rift in the Democratic party, labor's antagonism to Byrnes, the South's refusal to countenance Henry Wallace, and finally Roosevelt's choice of Truman—literally fired the Missouri Senator into a role he scarcely imagined playing. Psychologically, Truman was unprepared to be President. Far less prepared than for instance Thomas E. Dewey. Since 1938 Dewey had wanted to be President, visualized himself as President and strained every effort to be President. Truman merely campaigned along with the man who was President. He could not project his thinking to the point of seeing himself in the job.

He had not sought the Presidency. This became a refrain in almost every speech, in small intimate gatherings, and at public meetings. Finally it became such a political liability that Truman's friends, including Democratic leader Alben Barkley, Speaker Rayburn, and Cabinet members protested that he was jeopardizing his



own chance of being a successful leader and prejudicing the Democratic party itself. They hinted that he was belittling the exalted office to which he was called.

Truman's humility was not merely undeniable. It was a positive handicap. He was clearly not the type of Chief Executive which government officials, the press and radio, and the American people themselves had expected.

## CHAPTER TWO

### FRICTION WITH CONGRESS

**T**HE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES carries into office a positive handicap. He is never free from it until he returns to private life. That handicap is the Congress of the United States.

President Truman, himself a former member of Congress and a popular man with many and varied friendships there, learned this fact before he had been many months in office.

Inherent in the nature of the executive office and Congress is a certain degree of friction. This abrasive quality between the two branches rubs with most irritation during the administrations of aggressive presidents, such as Franklin D. Roosevelt. At such times, each branch checks the other. Each is quick to blame the other for any weaknesses or inadequacies of the governmental performance. Each chafes at restraints, trying over the years to gain the upper hand. Neither fully succeeds.

The President is the only officer of government elected by all the people. The Vice-president is carried along as flotsam on the electoral tide. Members of Congress give their first thoughts to representation of the constituents of their own states and districts. Congress sadly lacks trained help and sources of information. Jealousies and the unwieldy character of its large membership further frustrate Congressional effort. Therefore, Congress as a collective body seldom leads, more often follows the national will. Its very function lends to checking, and sometimes to checkmating, national policy. On the other side, the executive department employs thousands of experts not elected to office. Scores of bureaus literally pour out plans, and specialized knowledge. With such backing, and because he is beholden to the entire nation, the President must demonstrate more daring, imagination, and foresight than

the individual members of the legislative body. These qualities bear the fruit of conflict.

At the 1944 Democratic convention in Chicago, the bitterest fight in decades occurred over selection of the Vice-presidential candidate. This resulted from the fear that Roosevelt might not live another four years and therefore his successor would have to possess most exacting qualifications. Nevertheless the Vice-president upon assuming the Presidency can claim no national mandate. He becomes President by virtue of the will of God, and the fact that another man and a national convention saw fit to give him the lowlier position on the national political ticket. Consequently, the voice of such a President is not regarded as embodying the same authority. This naturally results in Congress's attempting to reassert its independence and power.

Such conflict often promotes progress. It serves to avoid mistakes by subjecting governmental policy to exhaustive scrutiny and debate, until such time as public opinion can unite and demonstrate itself. It frequently leads to wise modification and improvement of hasty legislation and improvised policies.

Such discord, however, can also reduce itself to obstruction and frustration, an unwillingness either to lead or to follow. A paralysis of will then sets in, or an overextension of caution leading not to action or policy, but to the negation of both.

A great surge of emotional release in Congress followed when Truman was catapulted into the White House. The honeymoon was dramatic. It was also unreal. The Republican party reveled in the relief of being rid politically of the one man it feared and distrusted more than any other—the Roosevelt it had often floored but had never quite been able to keep down. It had feared his stubborn character and his consummate political maneuvers. For nearly thirteen years, the party had fought a rear-guard action, usually ineffectively, against New Deal policies. It had voted mostly against his programs. It blamed him largely for the war, and for Pearl Harbor. Death had accomplished a victory which the party could never achieve. It was gratified to have a new and, it was convinced, a weaker man in the White House.

There was something of pity for Harry Truman. Here was a good fellow. He would be reasonable. He was a so-called liberal, to be sure, but he would be amenable to suggestion and guidance—not a man to coddle and follow the radical fringe which had exercised such great influence on Franklin D. Roosevelt.

At the same time, the Republican leaders recognized the extremity of the nation's and the new President's position.

"We've got to pull together and help him," they said privately, "for the good of all of us." The times, the fearful urgency of the war demanded no less. Moreover, there were deep misgivings that the job of being President might prove too much for Harry Truman at the very outset. Nothing less than a concerted effort to prop him up and give him confidence would serve.

Something of the same feeling marked the entire country. In May, 1945, within a few weeks after he had taken office, Truman's popularity registered 87 per cent in the Gallup Poll, an all-time high and three points better than President Roosevelt had ever been.

Because Harry Truman had been a Senator himself, there were those in and out of Congress who concluded that he would consistently be amenable to the national legislature. This would be a good thing for the country. The Senate was buoyed up for an era of increased importance and weight in national policy. Old friends in the Senate cloakroom contemplated being consulted frequently, were prepared to offer advice and expected to see it followed.

This same psychology manifested itself in the House. "Harry," members were saying, "would be easy to get along with." He would listen. He had common sense. He was not capricious and would be guided by Congress instead of applying the whip.

Members trooped to the White House to pledge their unshakable loyalty, their support, and to offer advice. Republican Senators and Congressmen joined the parade. Truman was glad to see them. Their words were as musical as the sound of the bell to a fighter who has just taken a staggering punch to the jaw. The President needed encouragement. He got a paean of praise and pledges.

To almost every member, the President voiced his refrain. He

had not wanted the office and would need all the help he could get.

Congressmen, almost to a man, shouted that indeed they would help him to shoulder the burden. He was one of them, their kind.

But President Truman was acutely aware that this honeymoon would be short. He knew that it would dissolve in bitterness and disagreement between himself and Congress. That was in the very nature of the American government.

The compelling necessity of preparing for national defense and finally for war itself had forced Congress to hand over to the executive department vast authority. With the cessation of hostilities, Congress would rightly hesitate to continue most of those delegated powers: to control rents and prices, allocations of materials, seizure of mines and plants, to permit or withhold subsidies from the public treasury, and many other authorizations only granted under dire circumstances. At the same time it was clear that the ending of the shooting war would not solve the emergencies for which these powers had been granted.

Throughout the war years, Congress, acting under its constitutional directive to set policy, had insisted upon writing into each delegation of authority a termination date, beyond which the Executive could not exert control without a further affirmative act of the Congress. It had done this in expectation that there would be a postwar struggle over reducing executive rule, and had prudently placed itself in position to win this battle, if necessary, by inaction alone.

The halls of Congress for years had reverberated over the "blank check" delegation of constitutional power. Congress intended to do something about it.

President Roosevelt, a strong-armed Executive, had combined an adroit use of press, radio, patronage, and emergency to wring concessions from the Congress, in most instances granted grudgingly or only because Congress had nothing better to offer. Twelve years of this had put Congress on a wire edge. It was a welcome relief to know that the struggle would not have to be waged against the man who had been successful in the first instance.

Although President Roosevelt's death had sharpened GOP expectations of winning the Presidency at the first opportunity, its leadership was for the most part uninspired and ineffective.

Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg of Michigan, one of the most capable men of the party, showed a demonstrated capacity for growth and an undeniable sense of historical perspective, teamed with bulky Warren R. Austin of Vermont to lead the party away from isolationism by embracing a more realistic attitude toward the peace and international cooperation.

Robert A. Taft of Ohio in 1945 remained a prisoner of an ultra-legalistic, coldly formidable mind. He still nursed wounds which the new President inflicted upon him when, as a vice-presidential candidate, Truman denounced Taft's isolationism in Ohio. This occurred during a desperate campaign in which Taft was reelected to the Senate by a scant 18,000 votes. Taft's record was isolationist and conservative. He did not like Truman, and the feeling was mutual. They had never been friendly as Senators. The Truman warmth of personality could not be expected to thaw the iceberg that was Taft.

Republicans in the House of Representatives thought largely in terms of political advantage and the campaigns ahead, rather than in the formulation and advancement of definitive national policy. They yearned to be elected as the majority. Their leader was Joseph W. Martin, Jr., of Massachusetts, whom President Roosevelt had liked personally despite their around-the-compass disagreements. Martin had served as GOP National Chairman during the Willkie campaign in 1940 and consistently translated policy, as a minority frequently does, into terms of political effect. He was capable of the more vigorous, advance role he was later to assume. Martin's chief advisers and assistants were: Charles Halleck of Indiana, a pleasant and adroit politician; vociferous Clarence Brown of Ohio; Earl Michener of Michigan; Leslie Arends of Illinois; and roaringly conservative John Taber of New York. In many respects these men represented the inexorable grinding of the Congressional seniority system. No man could challenge their

sincerity, and none could argue their caliber. Basically conservative, they were not given to vision or untoward experimentation.

The Democratic party was also not richly endowed with dynamic direction. In the House, Speaker Sam Rayburn, a hard-fighting and modest progressive, offered sound counsel. He swore that he would give Truman every ounce of his loyalty and support, and he performed admirably. Through the years, Rayburn, first as chairman of the Interstate Commerce Committee, then Majority Leader, finally as Speaker, had served Roosevelt loyally. Often it had been an excruciating experience. He had found himself crossed and frustrated by the sudden promulgation of policies and legislation about which he had neither been consulted nor advised.

Roosevelt's labor policies had aggravated Rayburn, and he had regarded Vice-president Henry Wallace as a heavy mortgage on the party's opportunities.

John McCormack of Boston, a fighting Irishman, as Democratic Majority Leader, stood solidly for one thing: the party. He was a Roosevelt man to the core, and always would be. Although respecting the office that Harry Truman inherited, he could not find in Truman any shade of the qualities of statesmanship he discerned in Roosevelt. He even suspected that, despite his liberal record, Truman would go extreme right, and negate Roosevelt's policies which kept Northern labor, the Negro vote, and the lower income groups glued to the Democratic flypaper.

On the other hand, Southern Democrats, the core of reaction in the party—Congressmen like Eugene Cox of Georgia, Howard W. Smith of Virginia, John Rankin of Mississippi, and scores of others who followed their leadership—took heart from the fact that during the Civil War Truman's family had sided with the Confederacy. Here was a man to their liking. Out with all the Roosevelt programs, with the rights of organized labor, with anti-lynching, anti-poll tax, and Fair Employment Practices bills! Had not the millennium of reaction arrived with a new Democratic administration? Certainly the least to be expected was a regime

which, while liberal, would be practical and down to earth. Southerners were not alone in this. Republicans congratulated themselves on the same score.

Committee chairmen were for the most part rigidly conservative, men of advanced age who had reached their eminence not by any particular abilities but by virtue of staying in Congress so long that the decrepit seniority system had disgorged them at the top.

The Democratic party itself was split between Northern liberals who followed uncompromisingly the policies of Roosevelt, and the Southern Democrats who had supported Roosevelt on foreign policy and, when political expediency and governmental favors did not require it, on nothing else.

In the Senate, Alben W. Barkley, by many years Truman's senior in national politics, faced the same party schism. He had grown weary over the years, carrying the Roosevelt load. He had seen himself passed over many times in the dispensation of court appointments and many other honors, until his age, sixty-seven, and his indispensability in the Senate, had become positive factors against any promotion.

The conservative wing of the Democratic party in the Senate was as strong as that in the House, and possessed members of even greater ability and ingenuity. Men like Walter F. George of Georgia, Harry F. Byrd of Virginia, Millard E. Tydings of Maryland, and Theodore F. Gerry of Rhode Island could muster strong opposition on any issue. On domestic policy, Barkley had to cope with this center of reaction, a middle group of conservatives, a small number of mild liberals, and a fringe of Roosevelt fanatics.

Congressional experience showed clearly that Barkley in the Senate and Rayburn and McCormack in the House would have an uphill battle to pass any liberal program. The going had been tough enough even with the master political hand of President Roosevelt applying pressure to conservative recalcitrants of the party. Besides, with the emergency of war passed, Congress was sharpening its knife to whittle the executive department down to life-size again.

Before Truman had been in office a year, he was to declare bit-



terly to his closest friends that the Congress had given him less cooperation and more trouble than any President since Andrew Jackson. With his advisers, he even thought dangerously of a purge, such as Roosevelt had attempted on a broad scale in 1938 with disastrous political results.

Undoubtedly Harry Truman felt that he had met the Congress more than halfway. He often solicited their support. He lunched with Sam Rayburn and John McCormack in the Speaker's hide-away office, then insisted on meeting and shaking hands with every member of the House.

Four days after he took the oath of office, the President went to the House chamber personally to address a joint session, in which he said feelingly, "You, the Members of Congress, surely know how I feel. Only with your help can I hope to complete one of the greatest tasks ever assigned to a public servant. . . . With confidence, I am depending upon all of you."

The members stood, whistled, yelled, and cheered him to the echo. It seemed almost as if the lacework of steel girders supporting the sagging roof above vibrated with the strength of their emotion. The President smiled warmly, somewhat wanly after days and nights of intense strain. He stepped down from the rostrum and walked briskly and sharply back through the center aisle of the chamber. He paused to greet old friends, on both the Republican and Democratic sides of the aisle; a pat here, a whispered word there, or a handshake. No President ever made a more studied effort to be a good, sincere friend of Congress.

But withal the contrast was marked: Truman had political kin in Congress. But many were of limited vision; men older than he, men who had been in politics while Harry Truman was a farmer plowing through the warm fields in Missouri; men whose lives were largely spent and who now were ill prepared to grapple with the vast problems of the future. They depended upon Roosevelt for the inspiration, the planning, and the management of great national and global policies.

President Truman would have to lead. That was clear. Congress *might* decide to follow.

*Part II*  
**INTERNATIONAL CRISIS**



### CHAPTER THREE

## GROPING FOR PEACE

**A**S A MEMBER of the United States Senate, Truman encountered few problems which could not be settled by homely, friendly discussion. That was his way of doing business and reconciling discord. It worked with admirable success. That was how he managed the famous Senate National Defense Investigating Committee through more than three years without a minority report, and without a serious undercover schism in the group.

Within the Senate itself, conflict could always be settled by a vote, the victors generous in triumph, the defeated loyal in their rout. Given a fair opportunity, a willingness to credit the other man with decent motives, and a chance to sit down and talk it over, something could almost always be worked out once the disputants got down to business.

President Truman's one previous contact with Europe and its great issues of war and peace and world affairs was as a captain of artillery in France during World War I. He had read widely and well in history, but mostly pertaining to the United States and in the biographies around which history revolved. President Roosevelt did not find time to school Harry Truman in confidential matters of state. In the few Cabinet meetings Truman attended as Vice-president he heard mostly minor matters discussed and much friendly banter, with Roosevelt dominating the conversation.

Truman's first acts after becoming President were therefore tinged with desperation. Frantically he groped his way into the complex maze of international problems and commitments. He searched for the pieces to fit together the Roosevelt pattern of diplomacy, and to feel his own uncertain way into the future.

James F. Byrnes had departed from the Roosevelt administration after what he considered shabby treatment at the Chicago

convention. His departure jolted the Senate, whose members urged Roosevelt to appoint Byrnes Secretary of State to replace Cordell Hull who was an ill man at the Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland, and whose counsel was only partially available. They were deeply chagrined when the President chose Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., instead. This act testified louder than words that Roosevelt expected to run his own State Department.

Immediately upon Roosevelt's death, the Senate voiced collectively the fervent prayer, "I hope Harry Truman calls in Jimmy Byrnes." Despite his sincerity, energy, and good will, Stettinius was plainly no match for the job of writing a peace that would outlive a generation. Through the wearisome Dumbarton Oaks conference he competently steered the preliminary drafts and memoranda to be finally resolved at the United Nations conference in San Francisco. That conference was now only two weeks away. The Senate was plainly worried. So was the rest of official Washington.

Truman was regarded as a thoroughly capable Senator, though inexperienced in diplomatic and foreign affairs. Byrnes, on the other hand, had established a formidable reputation. In the Senate he had been master manipulator; the shrewdest compromiser and wirepuller who had sat in that body in a quarter century. He had served in Congress since before World War I, always in the thick of parliamentary maneuver and trade. Roosevelt in 1942 then elevated him to the Supreme Court as an Associate Justice, and in the emergency of war, he left the bench to serve as "Assistant President" to Roosevelt. Byrnes was a convivial, not too deep man with a fine sense of humor, able in debate, thoroughly trained in government, and acquainted by experience with international conferences. He did lack entirely the reputation for long thinking and integrity enjoyed by Hull, who had felt his way with Tennessee caution through previous crises. Yet clearly Byrnes was a man to be reckoned with; any Senator would say that, and many did. Truman's finest act would be to call Byrnes.

Byrnes himself felt this. He rushed back from his South Carolina home, put himself entirely at the disposal of his old Senate

colleague. In the Senate, Truman had learned many lessons from Byrnes, the elder, politically wiser man. It was perhaps hard for Byrnes—who had once been so near the Vice-presidency himself, with Truman scheduled to make the nominating speech—to regard his political junior with the reverence and regard normally attached to the Presidency. It was difficult, too, for the Senate not to conclude that Byrnes would soon replace the relatively unpracticed Stettinius.

This did not happen at once. Instead Truman decreed that the San Francisco conference should proceed on schedule, with Stettinius delegated to carry on negotiations as Secretary of State. There were serious unanswered questions about Russia's position, and specific arrangements which would have to be made with the Soviet upon the collapse of Germany. Harry Hopkins, although seriously ill, gave Truman all the information he possessed about the men in and around the Kremlin which he had gathered as Roosevelt's most intimate adviser. Byrnes interpreted the invaluable shorthand notes he had taken at the Yalta conference; though these did not encompass the private conversations Roosevelt had had with Churchill and Stalin. Hopkins agreed to return to Moscow for a hurried trip, make arrangements for a future conference between Truman and Stalin, and tie up loose ends of preliminary understanding in advance of the San Francisco meeting. This was good insurance even if it caused Washington to crawl with rumors of the wildest sorts of secret "deals" between the Soviet and the deceased President.

The United Nations conference at San Francisco opened thirteen days after Truman entered the White House. He sent a message by radio opening the session, to give the most auspicious start possible. Stettinius was flanked by the all-important Republican and Democratic Congressional delegates who would have to carry the burden of a bipartisan foreign policy when Congress was called upon to ratify the instruments of world peace.

To the San Francisco conference the President set forth the policy which was to guide his and America's actions. The United Nations must succeed, he said. It represented the hope of man-

kind. It would have the unqualified and unstinted support of the United States of America.

"You members of this conference are to be the architects of a better world," he declared. "In your hands rests our future. By your labors at this conference, we shall know if suffering humanity is to achieve a just and lasting peace.

"We must make certain, by your work here, that another war will be impossible. . . . If we do not want to die together in war, we must learn to live together in peace." It represented what all peoples everywhere wanted. It was a message of high hope.

The impressive charter, in its cloak of lofty language, was drafted. Truman personally attended the final session and read a glowing message: "You assembled . . . with the high hope and confidence of peace-loving peoples the world over. Their confidence in you has been justified. Their hope for your success has been fulfilled. The charter of the United Nations which you have just signed is a solid structure upon which we can build a better world. . . ."

America was bursting with pride. It was leading the world toward peace as well as to the military victory it sensed lay ahead. One success followed another for the new administration in Washington. President Truman himself carried the United Nations Charter to the United States Senate and asked its immediate ratification. Following a short and perfunctory debate lasting only a few days, it was ratified on July 28, 1945, by the overwhelming majority of 89 votes to 2. The reciprocal trade program was extended for two years, and international bargaining was aided by a grant of authority to the President to lower tariffs 50 per cent under the existing minimum levels.

After desultory skirmishing in Congress, the International Bank and World Monetary Fund, arranged at the Bretton Woods conference in New Hampshire, were also validated by legislation. In addition the Congress authorized and made the initial appropriations on a vast program of international relief through the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency.

To be sure, there had been some difficulties in the field of

foreign policy. Russian insistence on three votes in the United Nations Assembly, and the disclosure that Mr. Roosevelt had agreed to this came as a shock. But it was regarded simply as a bargain that had to be carried through. Latin-American nations, in return for supporting the United States policies, successfully maneuvered that this country support the admittance of pro-Axis Argentina to the United Nations at the conference. This led to a long series of painful negotiations, finally resolved in favor of the Argentines. Both situations were embarrassing, both at times fruitful of disagreement at the conference, and they disclosed that areas of conflict existed between policies of the major nations. But how wide those areas were to grow was not imagined.

After the Senate received and ratified the United Nations Charter, Stettinius, as was expected, resigned. On the same day, and to the relief of the entire Congress, Byrnes was appointed to succeed him. They had in the office of Secretary of State a man to their measure. Senators in particular regarded this as an extremely favorable development. America could now activate a real foreign policy.

The surrender of Germany, which coincided with Harry Truman's birthday on May 8, 1945, necessitated a rapid reassessment of the diplomatic and military offensive against Japan. At San Francisco, Admiral Nimitz and other officers advised the President that the Pacific war might last for as much as sixteen months. Moreover, the vast movement of men, navies, and air fleets into the European theatre would now have to head into the Pacific within twenty days after the war ended in Europe. A half-million casualties, it was believed, would be sustained in carrying through the invasion of the Japanese Empire. With that accomplished, the Japanese Kwantung Army of a million men would still remain in Manchuria, capable of sustaining a long and bloody war on the Asiatic continent after the heart of the empire had been pierced.

At Yalta, President Roosevelt extracted from Stalin a promise that Russian divisions, once free in Europe, would be turned against Japan and this Asiatic army. The commitment was in general terms. No specific time for the operation had been settled



upon. Roosevelt's successor would have to pin down a date.

In early July, 1945, President Truman went to Potsdam for the Big Three conference. He hoped to reach some sort of general basis for a settlement of German affairs, including reparations and demilitarization of Germany, together with an understanding on the writing of European peace treaties; but principally he needed that firm commitment from Marshal Stalin as to when and how Russia would enter the Pacific war.

Certainly Harry Truman had misgivings when he journeyed by warship to this crucial Big Three conference, a plain man fresh from the Senate and untried in diplomacy. Secretary of State Byrnes and a large staff of counselors accompanied him. To his surprise, Truman found that he rather liked Marshal Stalin, and confided to friends later that he could understand a man of such hard, unvarnished, and inflexible character. The President also conceived a liking for stocky, taciturn Marshal Zhukov, and a strong dislike for Foreign Commissar V. M. Molotov. He came to regard the latter as something of a villain in international diplomacy, given to haggling, switching positions, and displaying exasperating stubbornness.

When President Truman returned to Washington in early August, 1945, and reported to the nation on the Potsdam conference, the results were greeted as something of a diplomatic tour de force. During the negotiations the President had to act as peacemaker between Marshal Stalin and Molotov on one side, and Prime Minister Churchill on the other. Churchill and the Russians rowed heatedly. At times Stalin was coldly abrupt with the British; on other occasions, insultingly silent. Midway, the conference had to be adjourned for the pronouncements of the British election which resulted in Churchill's defeat and resignation as Prime Minister in accord with British parliamentary procedure. Whereas the Russians respected Churchill's aggressive character and exhaustive knowledge of European affairs, for Clement Atlee, Churchill's successor, who sat in on the conferences, they conceived a cool contempt. For two days after Atlee took over as new Prime Minister, Stalin absented himself

from the meetings. Rumor had it that he suffered from diarrhea. Americans joked that he had contracted a bad case of "Atleecitis."

In the area of major decision, Churchill and Stalin locked horns over the establishment of a Polish government. The British supported the refugee government at London. Stalin uncompromisingly stated that this was impossible. It would have to be the Warsaw government arrangement, functioning under Russian tutelage. There seemed nothing to do but accept the Warsaw government, and obtain a commitment on a free Polish election at a later date.

Truman proposed international control of major and strategic European waterways and canals, as a means of eliminating trade restrictions and lessening the economic and political conflict inherent in nationalized controls. On this, the best that could be accomplished was to refer the question to the Council of Foreign Ministers established at the conference.

A complicated formula of extracting reparations from Germany was evolved, and it was agreed that the council would draft the peace treaties for Italy and other Axis satellites. Generalized agreements regarding the demilitarization and control of former enemy governments were handed over to the Foreign Ministers to be worked out at some future date.

Actually these were small beginnings, though they took on the appearance of a major achievement for the new American President. Truman reported to the people immediately after his return from Berlin. In the light of subsequent events, that report seemed naïve and overly trustful.

"In the conference of Berlin," the President said, "it was easy for me to get along in mutual understanding and friendship with Generalissimo Stalin, with Prime Minister Churchill, and later with Prime Minister Atlee."

The President, indeed, got along better with Stalin, Churchill, and Atlee, than the three could get along with one another. The mutual distrust, if a respectful one, between Churchill and Stalin was as deep and broad as the steppes of Russia. Atlee and Churchill were political antagonists, and Churchill must have sensed the impending political defeat he was to suffer at home. Only Harry

Truman, the plain Missourian, who even as a boy had demonstrated the ability to act as conciliator, seemed able to keep harmony. Most of the time he occupied the center chair at the great conference table, sitting between the quarreling British and Russians. That the experience was not a happy one for Truman was proved in the three years following, by his resistance to all pressure for another meeting.

The weaknesses of the Potsdam arrangements were their inconclusiveness. Some tangible accomplishments resulted from the creation of the council and agreements to advance the work of a European settlement through this instrument. But the knottiest questions remained unresolved. What could not easily be achieved was deferred, and delegated on the part of the Russians to Molotov—the one man who demonstrated to Truman his apparent unwillingness to achieve anything.

The inadequacies of the Potsdam conference can not fairly be charged to President Truman. He had not taken part in striking the original bargains and possessed no firsthand knowledge of secret understandings or techniques of international manipulations. He inherited the errand of extending the olive branch, not rattling the sword.

At the same time, however, the President arrived in Potsdam prepared to lay down American policy without dilution. Of the many advisers present, only W. Averell Harriman, then Ambassador to Russia, shared his view: be patient, be plain, but above all, be firm.

With respect to the British, Truman did pursue this course, despite the entreaties of Churchill, by announcing America's intention to cut off lend-lease at one stroke when the war ended. It was regarding Russia that a conciliatory attitude prevailed. In particular Secretary Byrnes, Truman's senior in both the United States Senate and the executive branch, argued this course interminably. Byrnes had sat in with Roosevelt at the previous conferences and had carefully studied the issues and personalities involved. A soft answer, he said in effect, would turn away wrath.

For their part, the military, represented by Chief of Staff Admiral William Leahy, Chief of Staff General Marshall, and other high-ranking officers stressed the primary consideration of securing Russia's entry into the war against Japan. That would mean fewer American casualties.

Truman was nearly swamped by a torrent of advice urging conciliation. Yet his instincts told him he should lay down—in Missouri language—a firm, unequivocal policy. It was to require more than two years for Truman to become convinced that his instincts had been right.

In any event, the President succeeded in his central plan to nudge the Russians into the Japanese war, though Russia obviously came in for other than military reasons, and then only at the last hour. Moreover, the scientists perfecting the atomic bomb in New Mexico had much to do with Russia's last-minute decision.

During the Potsdam deliberations, Truman received perhaps the most important document ever written—the July 16, 1945, test results of the first atomic bomb, revealing its monstrous success. When the news was received, General Marshall said abruptly, "This will end the war." Within the next day or so, President Truman remarked to Marshal Stalin that the United States would soon loose over Japan a new bomb twenty thousand times as powerful as TNT. Stalin nodded his head, showing only a mild interest, but asked that he be kept informed of developments. Although he appeared to take the announcement as routine, he also seemed to understand what the atomic bomb meant. The Russians in fact knew far more about the nature of the bomb and its power than they were willing to disclose by any excited reaction to Truman's confidence.

At the same time, after announcing the bomb's existence, Truman hastily left the conference. Coming back on the cruiser *Augusta* he explained why. Leaning against the rail, he adjusted the wide visor on his cap, then told reporters traveling with him that he wanted to be away from the conference before the first bomb

fell on Japan. He issued orders that it be released before he got home. But he had not wanted it used when he could be questioned about it by Stalin, or for that matter, by Atlee.

Russia did not join the ultimatum of July 26 to Japan, issued by Britain, China, and the United States. Two days after the first bomb fell over Japan, and the awful destruction of Hiroshima was known, Russian armies were driving forward into Manchuria against the Kwantung troops, and Russia officially began her four-day war with Japan. On that day, August 8, 1945, Truman and Byrnes affixed their signatures to the United Nations Charter in a simple White House ceremony. Three hours later Truman faced hastily summoned reporters. The President said slowly, "Russia has declared war on Japan." He waited just an instant, then, "That's all."

The Truman administration had achieved a dramatic measure of success. Germany was defeated. Japan was suing for peace. The Potsdam negotiations were concluded. It did not seem that insolvable problems existed.

The President adhered strictly to the unconditional surrender formula of President Roosevelt, but he modified it to the extent of giving vital reassurances in the Potsdam ultimatum, which hastened the willingness of the Japanese to surrender. The ultimatum decreed: "We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners. The Japanese government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion, and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established."

In succeeding days, after President Truman's return from Potsdam, it became clear that it was not a question of whether Japan would surrender, but when and by what means. Broadcasts from Japan from the tenth of August on frayed the nation's nerves. Verified surrender negotiations were being reported through the Swiss government.

On August 13 President Truman went to bed and slept soundly. He left his naval aide, Commodore James K. Vardaman, at the executive offices to watch for any important break in developments. When he heard the radio broadcast of surrender, Vardaman called army and navy communications, learned that a surrender message had been received by the Swiss legation in Washington and was being decoded. The President and Vardaman breakfasted together that morning on bacon and eggs. Walking over to the executive offices they looked across into Lafayette Park. Several hundred soldiers, sailors, and plain citizens watched idly. Like the naval aide, they had conducted a nightlong vigil, finally tumbling off to sleep in the warm, lush grass.

For the rest of that historic day, there were frequent conferences with Secretary Byrnes, who slipped frantically in and out of the Executive Mansion. But otherwise Truman maintained a regular appointment schedule, even including a little meeting with the Duke of Windsor, who called to pay his respects.

The strain tightened as the day wore on. By late afternoon it approached the breaking point. Byrnes hurried from the White House and raced up the State Department steps. "Is anything expected?" reporters asked. "Yes, sir!" came the excited reply. A few minutes before seven o'clock the Secret Service men guarding the President's door let down the red cord and newsmen surged into Truman's office.

The assembly had been called together hastily. The news had come late for the 7 P.M. agreed-upon world release. The President looked up at the clock, then down at the paper in his hand. "The following," he said, "is the Japanese Government's message accepting our surrender terms. . . ."

That night saw a nation mad with joy at the end of four years of war. Every restraint so admirably followed at V-E Day was thrown off. A sailor stood atop a Pennsylvania Avenue streetcar with a whisky bottle, drinking toasts in the direction of the White House. Crowds surged like a tidal wave through the littered streets, as bedlam raged in the steaming, almost tropical twilight. Snake dances slithered past stalled busses and honking autos.

Sweating parents held their children up to see the roaring celebration. MP's, wearing steel helmets and with fixed bayonets, lined the White House grounds. A flying wedge of Secret Service men flanked the President as he made his appearance on the White House lawn. Into the microphone he said, "This is a great day. . . . This is the day when fascism and police government ceases in the world. . . ."

Harry Truman's stock never stood higher. He was President when complete victory had been achieved. Casualties in the Pacific were a half million under the lowest predictions. It had not been necessary to invade Japan—Truman had seen to that by decreeing use of the atomic bomb, courageously accepting this terrifying responsibility. The men were coming back! And at home the hated and nettlesome regulations of wartime were to be relaxed as speedily as possible. Already, gasoline rationing was abandoned. A man could drive up and order a full tank. Stoves, cars, and refrigerators would soon be back in the retail markets.

The capital—the nation—was deliriously happy. It was almost as if something unbelievable had happened—something that had been hoped for but never really expected.

The official V-J Day would be delayed until the actual signing of surrender. With pride, Truman designated the battleship *Missouri* as the scene for the official capitulation in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945.

"Liberty does not make all men perfect nor all society secure," the President said that night. "But it has provided more solid progress and happiness and decency for more people than any other philosophy of government in history. And this day has shown again that it provides the greatest strength and the greatest power which man has ever reached.

"We know that under it we can meet the hard problems of peace which have come upon us. . . . We face the future and all its dangers with great confidence and great hope. America can build for itself a future of employment and security. Together with the United Nations it can build a world of peace founded on justice and fair dealing and tolerance. . . . From this day we move for-

ward. We move toward a new era of security at home. . . ."

Victory was a heady wine. It swept the administration into a whirlwind of activity.

The President, on V-J Day and with scarcely two weeks' official notice, abruptly terminated lend-lease aid, but gave other nations the opportunity to negotiate the purchase of supplies still in transit or in storage.

This course Truman considered both logical and reasonable. It fulfilled the intention he had expressed at Potsdam to turn off the tap of United States goods and services through the lend-lease pipe line as soon as hostilities were over. Americans applauded his move. Congress and the country were pleased to observe a business-minded Missourian proving he was a hard man with a dollar. It demonstrated that the time had arrived for an accounting and revision of our foreign aid policy.

What Truman did appeared to be obviously in America's best interests. The method, however, constituted a serious diplomatic mistake. Truman's blunt action destroyed the humanitarian spirit in which lend-lease had been conceived. It had epitomized America's moral leadership. Foreign-affairs experts bemoaned the fact that Truman had not gone to Congress and emphasized how lend-lease had proved the salvation of the Allied cause. He could have urged that it be ended, but in such fashion that other credits, in the same spirit of brotherliness, be made obtainable. Further extension of credit was anticipated in any event, so why throw away such a priceless psychological advantage? Truman apparently did not appreciate these ramifications.

Moreover, the shutdown action placed an added strain upon the British economy, since much of lend-lease supplies constituted foodstuffs and raw materials, and since the British had drained their resources to the limit during the war. It put further stress upon the British people and caused considerable consternation to ravaged China. It was thought in the administration, as the President demonstrated in a message to Congress on September 6, 1945, that the relief programs, and lending through the Bretton Woods agencies and the other institutions would take up the lend-lease gap. But



these agencies were slow-moving, and two years later the International Bank was barely ready to start a modest program. Here perhaps, were the first soundings of trouble ahead.

With the end of hostilities on V-J Day, another termination problem arose. As was to be expected, the released emotion of victory gave rise to a monumental clatter to speed up demobilization.

In succeeding weeks an organized pressure campaign of fantastic proportions stampeded the Congress and forced what late was to appear as dangerously rapid disarmament. Snapshots of children and babies flooded into Congressional offices, many bearing identical legends scrawled in a childish hand held and guided by another and older person. "I want my daddy back." "I love my daddy, I want him back." Postal cards and letters came in by the thousands, and finally baby shoes and even locks of children's hair. The Senate Military Affairs Committee lost its head, then the companion House committee, then practically all of Congress.

Public opinion polls revealed the campaign as an organized letter-writing minority high-pressuring Congress. At the same time most people were voting in the polls for retention of a strong army and occupation force. The point system of gradual demobilization, as conceived by General Marshall, then Chief of Staff, was receiving general approval by all thinking citizens. Yet the heat was on Congress, and Congress in turn put the heat on the administration.

Demobilization was stepped up, again and again, in response to this demand. What first was a methodical process developed into a disorderly scramble. The few calm voices in Congress went unheard in the uproar. Representative Dewey Short of Missouri spoke unheeded words when he said, "After all the billions of treasure we have poured out; after all the lives we have sacrificed; after all that we have given up . . . shall we recklessly abandon the objective of our achievement and let the sands of victory flow through our open fingers? . . . Play safe with the country and not your seat in Congress."

Within twelve months after V-J Day the services had been halved, within two years the Army of 9,000,000 men had been

reduced to a bare 1,000,000. In less than six months it could not put even ten divisions in the field. Abandoned were air bases, communications centers, camps, equipment, and strategic locations clear around the world. The Navy of 2,300,000 men had been reduced to a complement of 350,000, its ships in service hardly equal to one task force at the height of the war. The mightiest military machine on earth was stripped.

Yet all this was not nearly so bad as it seemed. Not when viewed in the light of the United Nations Charter and the Potsdam conference. Either the United States supported those great intentions or disavowed them. America had never retained a big standing army unless she intended to use it. Most important, a big military establishment did not necessarily reflect a nation's war-making potential. Overwhelming superiority in productive capacity, mechanical know-how, technical resourcefulness, and full supplies of strategic materials determined that. Economic strength begot military strength. It was not the other way around. A big army also rusted and weakened through inactivity, draining the economy of man power and basic skills.

After the abrupt termination of lend-lease, the Truman administration poured out aid under another guise. It became necessary in mid-1946, unless we were to witness the financial and moral disintegration of the British Empire, to extend a loan of \$3,750,000,000, under terms so harsh that there were those in Britain who favored outright rejection of any assistance.

Economic dissolution in Europe reached a stage of collapse, with Britain unable to help by rehabilitating and modernizing her industry with the money loaned her. Through United Nations relief agencies, we pumped nearly three billions into various forms of European relief, and new needs developed daily.

Secretary of State Byrnes endured a wearying and killing pace of meetings of the Council of Foreign Ministers, at London and at Paris. No one worked harder, or, at times, less effectively. At every point he was up against Russian intransigence. It became increasingly clear to him, and critically apparent to Marshall, Eisenhower, and the military commanders in the occupation areas, that

we appeared unprepared to talk in the language which Russians understood—armed divisions. Byrnes felt he was holding a cap pistol and playing international poker with an exposed hand.

The first meeting of the Foreign Ministers in London had failed dismally. President Truman felt this reverse keenly, and so advised Byrnes, though he later conceded that he probably could have done no better.

Only minor achievements could be counted. What had been supercharged with promise fizzled into disappointment. The United States, strongest nation in the world, literally came to where, in the words of Senator Vandenberg, it stood "with a chip on each shoulder and both arms in a sling."

The accomplishments of achieving the final drafts of peace treaties with the Axis satellites were heavily outweighed by inability to approach any decision on German and Austrian peace treaties. At every step, Byrnes met unyielding resistance from Moscow, even on the smallest matters. The conviction grew that Russian suspicion and diplomatic policy precluded establishment of a stable Europe.

European chaos and with it the spread of communism was obstructing every proposal for unification, rehabilitation, and industrial revival of Germany, the key to Europe.

President Truman, who banked so much on personal relations, discovered that effective foreign policy is not built around personalities, but upon principles, implemented by the willingness and the ability to back up specific issues with something more than persuasion.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MOSCOW'S BITTER FRUITS

**A**RTHUR H. VANDENBERG of Michigan is a big proud man with a fine sense of the dramatic, and an acute ear for Olympian phrases. A friend once said of him that if Vandenberg were purchasing a suit, he would look first at the style and cut, second at the stitching and fit, and lastly at the quality of the material itself. More than any other United States Senator in a decade, Vandenberg possesses a priceless perspective of history. He sees down the long road. Nothing is ever moderate or common. It exists as either "total" or not at all.

After January 10, 1945, Vandenberg began his growth toward stature of virtual equality with the Secretary of State in guiding and determining United States foreign policy. On that date he rose majestically in the Senate, read himself forever out of effective leadership of isolation, turned squarely about toward international cooperation, and moved into a strategic position where he might either defeat or ensure the success of international commitments formed by the administration in power. He was bitterly attacked for this course. But Vandenberg had been indulging in heavy thoughts, confided to no one. He pecked aimlessly at the piano in his Wardman Park Hotel apartment in Washington while trying to untangle the enigma of world peace. He talked endless hours with his colleague, Senator Warren R. Austin of Vermont, and with Secretary of State Cordell Hull. By a careful process of reasoning he arrived at the conviction that peace could be ensured only by sincere, wholehearted international cooperation, implemented by binding agreements between nations.

President Roosevelt encouraged this development of Vandenberg, and accorded him the full confidence first of Secretary Hull and then Secretary Stettinius. Soon Vandenberg enjoyed a degree of power as a Senator unequaled since the days of Henry

Cabot Lodge, Sr., who, primarily, had defeated the peace policies of Woodrow Wilson. Vandenberg's instincts, however, evolved as precisely contrary to those of Lodge. Partisan advantage did not motivate Vandenberg, and his philosophy was tempered with the stern judgment of history which he felt ever at his side.

On foreign policy, Vandenberg was the United States Senate. Before long, he was to become much of the State Department as well. He had assisted in drafting the United Nations Charter, then in bringing it successfully through the Senate. He had participated in top policy decisions, with modifications being made according to most of his suggestions. Vandenberg knew what it took to satisfy the Senate, and, mainly, that was what was required to satisfy himself. His influence grew as the months passed, until it became an overriding factor in foreign affairs.

The preliminary conference of Foreign Ministers at London in September, 1945, established under the terms and machinery of the Yalta agreement, was a notable failure, mainly, as subsequent events disclosed, because of the very fact that the Yalta agreement had been made.

It was decided at Yalta that the Kuril Islands, off the coast of Asia, were to go to Russia. The Russian-sponsored Polish government was accepted with a proviso that it would be "democratized and ultimately made more representative of all parties." Germany would be cut up into four zones for joint occupation by the Allied forces. In addition, Russia was given a share in the political and economic arrangements of every area liberated from German occupation, as well as Nazi satellite territories. Likewise, Russia was to regain the economic interests which Japan had wrested from her in Manchuria.

In the United Nations Assembly, Russia would be given three votes: one for the nation proper, and one each for the Ukraine and White Russia. It was also conceded, with only minor modifications, that an absolute veto by any one of the major powers of the Security Council be allowed, a vital provision which Russia had insisted upon and in which Great Britain and the United States

acquiesced. Under this arrangement Russia was enabled to paralyze decision and action by the council in a score of crises.

Perhaps other agreements at Yalta were still to be disclosed. At all events, Russia won a major portion of her demands. Moreover, no effective safeguard against Russia's swollen might had been provided. It was this which probably most agitated Churchill, who understood so clearly the efficacy of a balance of power. The word seeped out in Washington from those attending the Yalta meeting and confirmed that President Roosevelt, in attempting to act as peacemaker, had voted with Marshal Stalin to override the British objections.

In any event Vandenberg regarded the results of the London Foreign Ministers' meeting as forecasting serious difficulties ahead. Truman sensed this too and utilized Navy Day, October 26, 1945, to deliver a much needed moral lecture to the world.

The President's Navy Day speech was aimed directly at the troublesome diplomatic situation. Truman pledged to retain a strong Army and Navy, to effect the disarmament of the Axis, to support the United Nations and preserve Western Hemisphere integrity. But the essence of the case the President put in one succinct paragraph: "In this troubled and uncertain world," he told his vast metropolitan audience, "our military forces must be adequate to discharge the fundamental mission laid upon them by the Constitution of the United States—to 'provide for the common defense' of the United States." Here, imbedded, was the kernel of the whole situation.

"We seek no territorial expansion or selfish advantage," the President continued. "We have no plans for aggression against any other state, large or small. We have no objective which need clash with the peaceful aims of any other nation.

"We believe in the eventual return of sovereign rights and self-government to all peoples who have been deprived of them by force.

"We shall approve no territorial changes in any friendly part of the world unless they accord with the freely expressed wishes

of the people concerned." (This was a restatement of former Secretary of War Stimson's 1931 doctrine of nonrecognition of conquest.)

"We believe that all peoples who are prepared for self-government should be permitted to choose their own form of government by their own freely expressed choice, without interference from any foreign source. That is true in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, as well as in the Western Hemisphere.

"By the combined and cooperative action of our war allies, we shall help the defeated enemy states establish peaceful democratic governments of their own free choice. And we shall try to attain a world in which Nazism, Fascism and military aggression can not exist.

"We shall refuse to recognize any government imposed upon any nation by the force of any foreign power. In some cases it may be impossible to prevent forceful imposition of such a government. But the United States will not recognize any such government.

"We believe that all nations should have the freedom of the seas and equal rights to the navigation of boundary rivers and waterways and of rivers and waterways which pass through more than one country.

"We believe that all states which are accepted in the society of nations should have access on equal terms to the trade and the raw materials of the world.

"We believe that the sovereign states of the Western Hemisphere without interference . . . must work together as good neighbors in the solution of their common problems.

"We believe that full economic collaboration between all nations, great and small, is essential to the improvement of living conditions all over the world, and to the establishment of freedom from fear and freedom from want.

"We shall continue to strive to promote freedom of expression and freedom of religion throughout the peace-loving areas of the world.

"We are convinced that the preservation of peace between na-

tions requires a United Nations Organization composed of all the peace-loving nations of the world who are willing jointly to use force if necessary to insure peace."

Here the President laid down the broad fundamentals of American foreign policy. It was ambitious and idealistic. It also stood in direct contradiction to the specific realities of the Soviet position.

The return of sovereign rights, as understood in America, did not, for example, accord with Soviet policies in the Balkan States or in Poland. Neither did the concept of refusal to acquiesce in territorial changes not freely approved by the peoples involved. At the same time, Truman's denunciation of military aggression contained an implied hint to Russia. Nonrecognition by the United States of governments imposed by force also projected conflict in the same quarter, even though the United States was to trim and hedge this principle on later occasions in line with the President's prudent reservation that "in some cases it may be impossible to prevent forceful imposition of such a government."

"The immediate, the greatest threat to us is the threat of disillusionment, the danger of insidious skepticism—the loss of faith in the effectiveness of international cooperation," the President said. "Such a loss of faith would be dangerous at any time. In an atomic age it would be nothing short of disastrous."

But faith is of works not of words.

Less than three weeks after these pronouncements, Vandenberg, perceiving clearly the basic trend of events, began to agitate for a more realistic American approach.

He wanted a new era of cooperation between the two strongest members—the United States and Russia—of the United Nations Security Council so recently established. He wanted specific problems solved. Developments in the Balkans, for instance, were deeply disquieting. And regarding the status of Iran with its vast oil resources, the United Nations was merely moving into a period of trial and dispute over the presence of British and Soviet troops.

Vandenberg was also highly dissatisfied by the Yalta agreement which turned over Poland to the Russian-blessed Warsaw govern-



ment. This piece of cynicism was shaking the very foundations of peace, he reasoned, and he simply could not be optimistic in such circumstances because optimism was unwarranted.

On November 15, 1945, the House of Representatives provided Vandenberg the opportunity to voice his apprehensions. The House attached to a relief appropriation an amendment barring use of the funds within the borders of those nations which did not provide free access for American news reporters. This meant Russia and her satellites.

Vandenberg opposed the amendment successfully. He argued that it would simply have punished the people for the sins of a government not of their choosing. Then he went on to express more intrinsic considerations. "The world is grimly skeptical," he declared. "Too many promises in the Atlantic Charter have been scuttled. . . . When the iron curtain of secrecy falls around an area, suspicion is unavoidable, restless conjecture substitutes for knowledge, and dependable trust is out of the question.

"These are not the instruments of peace and progress. Understanding and good will cannot flourish in a vacuum. . . . The best evidence of good faith on the part of major powers in executing the trust which they have insisted upon assuming in the peacetime liquidation of this war will be to lift the iron curtain and let in the light. . . .

"This shattered world is in need of new sources of dependable confidence, new well-springs of hope. . . ."

Within six months after entering the White House, Harry Truman reestablished a cabinet form of government. He would appoint the head of a department and then delegate to him all of the major problems of policy and administration, holding him accountable for performance in the face of any difficulties met along the way. In this, Secretary of State Byrnes took the President literally and plunged into his work with more zest than acumen. Before long, liaison between the State Department and the White House executive offices—across a 40-foot street called "Executive Avenue"—narrowed, withered, and almost died. Byrnes acted

without knowing the President's mind. The President spoke without knowing Byrnes's maneuvers.

Byrnes conducted foreign affairs with a degree of freedom and autonomy rarely evidenced in Washington. Whether this condition resulted from Byrnes's feeling that he was a superior and more experienced student of government in all its branches than was President Truman, or simply from a willingness to shoulder responsibility, remains open to conjecture. In any event, it reaffirmed the truth that although a President must delegate authority and responsibility, he may not become disassociated with the consequences. For he alone must carry the ultimate weight of public accountability. The failures of Byrnes—however sincere and hard-fought the struggle—were more particularly the failures of the President.

How decisive these failures were to become did not manifest itself until December, 1945, at the conference of Foreign Ministers in Moscow. In those ten days from December 16 until the day after Christmas, United States foreign policy hit its lowest point since the end of the war. It also engendered a reassessment between President Truman and Secretary Byrnes which in turn caused a crucial recasting of American policy. Moreover, it further galvanized Arthur Vandenberg, the one man who could make or break such policy in the United States Senate.

There were few consultations between Moscow and Washington during the negotiations. The President was not afforded full opportunity of reviewing pending decisions and commitments.

The fruits of the Moscow conference were bitter.

At London in September, the United States insisted that all participants in the war be parties in drafting the peace treaties. At Moscow this was compromised in Russia's favor. Signers of the armistices should take part in making the original drafts which would then be submitted to a peace conference to be called not later than May 1, 1946. However, the drafts were also to be re-submitted to the original states, with concurrence of the "large" powers being mandatory before the treaties could be finally ap-

proved. It was small comfort that the United States should retain a veto over treaties which did not contain the majority recommendations. Russia could simply block any such treaty in the first place by vetoing it.

The authority of General MacArthur in Tokyo was diluted by the creation of a Far Eastern Commission, an advisory body constituted to make recommendations and suggestions to him, and an Allied Council to "advise and consult in carrying out the terms of the surrender." MacArthur, in a secret message to Washington before Byrnes left for Russia, had registered his objections. Thereafter, however, he was not advised of developments, and when the Moscow agreement was announced, he denounced the arrangement as having in no way met his objections. He even thought for the moment of resigning. The five-year trusteeship over Korea, decided at the Moscow meeting, had revolted the people of that torn land. As MacArthur said later, it was so nearly the preachments of the Japanese occupation that the Koreans "vomited, and no one could blame them." It meant another dose of the same medicine they had swallowed for forty years—occupation bondage.

The Far Eastern Advisory Commission, although purely advisory, afforded enormous nuisance value to its member, Russia. MacArthur was to retain authority to issue directives and to appoint Japanese cabinet members one at a time, serially, it was assumed, if the entire cabinet should resign. It was also decided at Moscow that Russia would remove her troops from Manchuria but not until February 19, a promise not redeemed until two months overdue. Meanwhile, by force of arms, the Russians were looting Manchuria on a monumental scale. The Moscow terms meant division of authority to a degree serving to undermine MacArthur's great accomplishments.

Finally, it was agreed at Moscow that there should be established a United Nations commission to study and recommend controls of atomic energy. Vandenberg and other Senators were almost hysterically disturbed by this. They feared the United States' secret know-how of the manufacture of atomic bombs would be bartered off. At Vandenberg's insistence a statement was drafted

and issued from the White House to assure the nation that this was not contemplated.

When the President ascertained the results of the Moscow conference he was disappointed. So was Admiral William D. Leahy, whom Truman retained in the capacity of Presidential Chief of Staff.

Leahy, a conservative and highly responsible man, had served as Chief of Naval Operations, then Governor of Puerto Rico, Ambassador to Vichy, France, and finally as Roosevelt's Chief of Staff. Leahy entertained a consuming distrust of Russia and was thoroughly out of sympathy with Byrnes's greatest forte, compromise. The Admiral adhered to the principle of showdown; concession, retreat, or skirmish held no status in his creed. It was not long after Byrnes became Secretary of State that Admiral Leahy was advising President Truman that compromise might well prove critically detrimental to the interests of the United States and to world peace.

President Truman was aboard the yacht *Williamsburg*, cruising the Potomac River for a short holiday rest when Byrnes returned from Moscow to make his report. Admiral Leahy, who accompanied the President, regarded the results of the Moscow conference as a violation of the principles which Truman had enunciated in Manhattan on Navy Day. He believed that the arrangements with respect to Balkan governments were highly unsatisfactory, and he reminded the President that there was almost no liaison with the White House during the negotiations. Under the Constitution, said Leahy, it was the President who was charged with conducting foreign affairs, with the Secretary of State as his agent, and the President as the one who must take final responsibility. The President, not the Secretary, appointed and received ambassadors. The President fixed policy.

It was time to act in the same realistic fashion as Russia, Leahy insisted. If this kept up much longer there would soon be no American policy at all. This "get tough" core within the administration centered around Leahy, the military man closest to Truman's side.

Leahy's bill of indictment, MacArthur's reaction, and the misgivings which Senators communicated to the White House as the Moscow conference proceeded, combined to force the show-down. When Byrnes boarded the President's yacht, the tension was supercharged. For weeks, Truman had felt that things were not going well with the administration. He felt a lack of high-caliber advice and guidance.

That night American foreign policy underwent a drastic reassessment. President Truman and Byrnes, in the President's cabin, talked for two hours. It perhaps marked the moment that the President ceased to be plain Harry Truman and became President in his own right, if any such time can be noted in his conduct of foreign affairs. The two discussed fully and in detail the entire proceedings at Moscow, the lack of liaison and consultation. Secretary Byrnes told his friends (and subsequently wrote) that the President did not criticize the Byrnes policies or accomplishments, meager as they might be. Russia had carried the fight all the way. The bear had proceeded on the thesis that by doubling its demands and reinforcing its intransigence, it might more easily accomplish what it actually expected to achieve. This represented far less than the stated demands.

Byrnes had had a bad time at Moscow, and the President said as much. More hardheaded teamwork was needed. American policy, if anything, was too flaccid.

Subsequently at dinner, before leaving again for Washington, Byrnes reviewed the Moscow meeting in detail for the President's advisers. If there was a lack of condemnation, there was likewise lacking any genuine enthusiasm of approbation. Admiral Leahy was still disturbed about the Balkan arrangements.

Byrnes himself diplomatically hinted at the failure when he reported the next evening to the nation by radio. He had tried valiantly, but he had struggled in a sphere in which compromise would not work.

"We must realize," he broadcast, "that international conferences are not intended to give individual statesmen the opportunity to achieve diplomatic successes. They are intended to be

useful in the adjustment of delicate social and human relations between states with common interests and many divergent interests."

However that might be, no definitive agreements based upon mutual trust and understanding had been reached between Russia and the United States. The misgivings entertained by Senator Vandenberg were now communicated to Secretary Byrnes in forceful terms. Vandenberg pointed to the lack of harmony between the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of which Vandenberg was the ranking minority member, and the State Department. Secretary Byrnes, formerly a Senator himself, was not displaying the same confidence and cooperation which had animated the novice Stettinius to take his problems to older and wiser political heads. This condition Byrnes recognized and speedily remedied even though he could not at the same time gloss over or patch up the failures of American foreign policy. Nevertheless, it was an important step in implementing the new approach which Truman ordered aboard the yacht.

The London conference of Foreign Ministers in February, 1946, was, as the President admitted privately and Byrnes declared openly, something approaching failure. The first General Assembly of the United Nations, held at the same time, provided a similar disappointment. Senator Vandenberg spoke forthrightly when he reported to the Senate on the meetings.

"I return with no illusions that automatic peace awaits the world just because the machinery of the United Nations is now in gear . . ." he said dramatically in his opening remarks. He went on to relate that Syria and Lebanon in the Middle East had complained against the presence of French and British troops. Russia agitated the difficulty and, said Vandenberg, "it seemed to me the distinguished Soviet delegate . . . seemed to be less interested in helping Lebanon and Syria than he was in baiting France and Britain. . . ." For their part, France and Britain voluntarily agreed to withdraw their troops after Russia had exercised her veto on a compromise. Regarding the thorny problem of Iran, the Michigan Senator related that Russian intransigence in this area of diplo-

matic counterstroke had been exasperating. Also, Russia had laid claim to Italian colonies and supported the loud demands of Yugoslavia on Italy. Russia, in addition, insisted upon the return of the distressed, homeless, anti-Communist refugees, hovering in concentration camps in former Axis territories. The great powers suspected their fate would be further persecution and slavery.

"It would be entirely futile," Vandenberg said, "to blink at the fact that two great rival ideologies—Democracy in the west and Communism in the east—here find themselves face to face with the desperate need for mutual understanding. . . . It might even be said that the future of the United Nations itself is wrapped up in this equation. . . .

"I assert my own belief that we can live together in reasonable harmony if the United States speaks as plainly upon all occasions as Russia does; if the United States just as vigorously sustains its own purposes and its ideals upon all occasions as Russia does; if we abandon the miserable fiction . . . that we somehow jeopardize the peace if our candor is as firm as Russia's always is; and if we assume a moral leadership which we have too frequently allowed to lapse. . . .

"There is a line beyond which compromise cannot go; even if we have previously crossed that line under the pressures of the exigencies of war, we cannot cross it again. . . . Respect must precede trust; and both are indispensable to peace.

"I confess," Senator Vandenberg said, in part, in closing his address, "that in this first meeting of the United Nations I missed the uplifting and sustaining zeals for a great, crusading, moral cause which seemed to imbue the earlier Charter sessions at San Francisco. . . . I sensed at London what seemed to be too great a tendency to relapse into power politics, in greater or less degree, and, as someone has said, to use the United Nations as a self-serving tribune rather than a tribunal. . . ."

Vandenberg had not deserted the cause. Real improvement had been made in perfecting the machinery. He pointed to the wide areas of agreement. But he had hoisted signals of distress because more fundamental progress had not resulted.

It was at the same United Nations meeting in London following the Moscow conference that Vandenberg as United States delegate injected a realistic leaven into diplomatic negotiations. That he chose to strengthen foreign policy by every energy at his command contributed mightily to his own stature, and to the solvency of a diplomacy which had seemed almost on the edge of bankruptcy.

That some cause existed for Russian suspicions of capitalistic democracy went without much argument. Our growth of wealth, the threat of an ever more efficient industrial machine capable of immense production in war or peace, an expanding money economy, and years of strained relations between the two antagonistic industrial and political systems would inevitably heighten Soviet suspicions and aggravate tensions.

By a combination of fumbling circumstances these suspicions were given a mighty fillip on March 5, 1946, at the little town of Fulton, Missouri. President Truman sat on the stage of the Westminster College auditorium that night while the master of British diplomacy spilled international milk across three continents. Winston Churchill knew acutely the long and historic success of the British policy of blocking off, on every continent, threatening growths of power. This was what he had failed to accomplish at Yalta. The British system had stood primarily because it sought at the first danger in all the far-flung corners of the empire to neutralize any challenge to British authority.

Churchill must have welcomed the message he received from President Truman inviting him to visit the United States and accept an honorary degree at Westminster College.

President Truman said later that he had not seen the Churchill address in advance, and probably he had not or he would have realized it would throw delicate diplomatic relations entirely out of balance by piling on a new weight of suspicion and ill will. The former British Prime Minister—while the audience listened with considerable amazement—offered a burden of counsel. The atomic bomb? "It would be criminal madness to cast it adrift in this still agitated and ununited world." Military collaboration be-



tween England and the United States? It ought to embrace common studies, similar weapons, interchange of officers, joint use of forces and bases, all the paraphernalia used and developed in war. Mutual defense? "This principle should be extended to all the British Commonwealths [not only Canada] with full reciprocity."

From this point on, the speech was an unvarnished warning to Soviet Russia. Communism had cast a shadow across the world, and nobody knew what it portended, Churchill said with solemnity.

"From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an iron curtain has descended across the continent. . . .

"The Communist parties, which are very small in all these eastern states of Europe, have been raised to preeminence and power far beyond their numbers and are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control. Police governments are prevailing in nearly every case. . . .

"Whatever conclusions may be drawn from these facts . . . and facts they are . . . this is certainly not the liberated Europe we fought to build up. Nor is it one which contains the essentials of permanent peace. . . .

"The outlook is also anxious in the Far East and especially in Manchuria. . . ."

Churchill drove on, hammering in his points. This was not the language of diplomacy; it was an old-fashioned telling off. He saw in the "haggard world" not even the hopes that had marked the inception of the ineffectual League of Nations a quarter century before. But he did not admit the inevitability of war. He chewed his words as he continued.

"I do not believe that Soviet Russia desires war. What they desire is the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines. . . . Our difficulties and dangers will not be removed by closing our eyes to them; they will not be removed by mere waiting to see what happens; nor will they be relieved by a policy of appeasement. What is needed is a settlement, and the longer this is delayed, the more difficult it will be and the greater our dangers will become. From what I have seen of our

Russian friends and allies during the war, I am convinced that there is nothing they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for military weakness. . . .

"If the population of the English-speaking Commonwealth be added to that of the United States, with all that such cooperation implies in the air, on the sea, and in science and industry, there will be no quivering, precarious balance of power to offer its temptations to ambition or adventure. On the contrary, there will be an overwhelming assurance of security."

Winston Churchill, with brilliant rhetoric, spoke things which the Truman administration was learning by bitter experience. The Russian reaction was instant and violent. Churchill was attacked for the speech, Truman for having lent the occasion presidential prestige and color. Truman probably felt a deep chord of sympathy for much the former British Prime Minister had said. But the event marked a diplomatic blunder of no small magnitude.

It was about the time of the Churchill episode that Byrnes and the President began to consult regularly with Vandenberg and Senator Tom Connally of Texas, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. In these conferences, it was Vandenberg who spoke up to strengthen policy, to maintain a firm attitude toward Mr. Molotov, and if necessary to stand by conviction and renounce any progress which might be achieved at the expense of principle.

He did this notably in the third meeting of the Foreign Ministers in Paris in April and May of 1946. In fact, by that time the Communist press characterized him as the "number one" opponent of Molotov in the negotiations. This conference, like the others, failed except that it revealed the United States as definitely moving into a showdown position.

It was during this same period that Vandenberg proposed that the United States, as a means of assuring Russia of safety and obviating her apparent determination to build up a ring of satellite buffer states, agree to an international treaty ensuring the disarmament of the Axis and prevention of aggression for twenty-five or

more years. In the course of the Paris conference Secretary Byrnes translated this proposal into a flat offer, putting Russia on the spot. She rejected it.

Russia also blocked the holding of the peace conference. This prompted Byrnes, with Truman's, Vandenberg's, and Connally's full approval, to serve notice that by June of that year, 1946, when the ministers met again the United States would insist on calling the conference, regardless of any still pending disagreements over the texts and provisos of the proposed treaties.

The fourth meeting of ministers at Paris in June and July of 1946 produced even more tangible results and demonstrated a further tightening of United States policy. Russia was thrown considerably off balance by the firm adherence to principles which the United States set forth in the long sessions. A peace conference was finally called for late July, a last-minute objection by Russia, threatening to upset the conference by seeking to exclude China, being circumvented. China was accorded full rights. Attempts by Russia to bind the conference by prearranged rules were also thwarted. The vital question of the disposition of Italian Trieste—with Russia backing Yugoslavia's demand for the port city—was settled by the only possible if unsatisfactory method of making Trieste an international city. A four-way tangle between Russia, Italy, Britain, and France over the Italian colonies was composed by giving the Ministers' council a year to effect a satisfactory arrangement, or, after that, automatically passing the colonies to the United Nations Trusteeship Council. Reparations demands of Russia and her satellites were scaled down after violent argument and dispute over whether President Roosevelt at Yalta had agreed to ten billions of reparations from Germany, or had only said it could be considered. All ministers finally concurred in the demilitarization of Germany, although Vandenberg characterized the method as "a matter of appalling disagreement."

"It was the short-range, the immediate problem in Germany, which disclosed the true depth of cleavage between the great powers on this subject," Vandenberg reported back to the Senate on July 16, 1946. "Here the differences were not only acute," he

said, "they were often acrimonious. The basis of trouble is the fact that the Potsdam agreement ordered Germany handled during the occupation as an economic unit. But it also divided Germany into four zones of military occupation—American, Russian, British, and French. The result is that Germany is being administered in four airtight compartments. . . . Worse, the zones are separated by intense suspicions. Mr. Molotov . . . flatly questions whether demilitarization is faithfully pursued in other zones, particularly the British. Mr. Bevin, speaking for Britain, replies that he has made a full public report . . . but that he understands German factories are actually producing new armament in the Russian zone, and he cannot get the facts. Mr. Molotov charges the American Commander, General Clay, is illegally withholding Russian reparations in the American zone in violation of the Potsdam agreement. Mr. Byrnes replies that we find it necessary in self-defense to withhold reparations until there are reciprocal relations between the zones as required by the Potsdam agreement. . . .

"Mr. Molotov quotes Yalta to prove that President Roosevelt promised Russia ten billion dollars in reparations from Germany. Mr. Byrnes quotes Yalta to prove that President Roosevelt did nothing of the sort. . . .

"Everybody wanted an investigation, but nobody could agree as to what kind of an investigation. . . .

"Someone said at Paris that if this recent council had been confined to America, France, and Britain it would have achieved total agreement, including preliminary plans for the German and Austrian treaties within ten days. This is simply another way of saying that eastern Communism and western Democracy are the forces which confront each other in planning for a new and better world. They differ in ideas, ideals, and ideologies . . ."

American policy was coming to a full turn under the impact of this impasse. Arthur Vandenberg, as much as any man, carried the great burden of responsibility. Almost alone, he drenched the lingering embers of isolationism in the United States Senate. Thereupon he became the primary instrument for deflecting Russia's probing for soft spots in America's position. As he saw it, and he

laid bare the jangled nerves of international relations with the precision of a surgeon, the point was reached where principle must rule.

"War between us," he roared out the words in the Senate, "would be an unthinkable calamity, which I am certain they, as well as we, abhor." Then speaking straight to Moscow, in a direct fashion which the Secretary of State could not essay, Vandenberg suggested "a few simple truths."

"You should understand with complete conviction, that we are just as determined as you are that military aggression—from any source and no matter what its guise—shall never curse the earth again; and we are enlisted in this cause for keeps. And you should understand there is no thought of conquest in our souls.

"You should understand, with equally complete conviction, that we cannot be driven, coerced, or pressured into positions which we decline voluntarily to assume; that we will not bargain in human rights and fundamental liberties anywhere on this earth."

There was no doubt that by this time Secretary Byrnes subscribed fully to Vandenberg's views. He recognized in Vandenberg a great support, and a man of ability and courage at the conference table. For months he worked in close collaboration with Vandenberg until it could fairly be said that the United States had two Secretaries, one in the State Department, the other in the Senate. The two largely guided the realignment of policy which followed the Moscow conference and the frank discussion in the stateroom of the President's yacht.

Military demobilization in the United States, it was true, hampered Byrnes somewhat, since Russia never failed to recognize military preparedness, or, as General Marshall called it, the "military posture."

Despite this, however, the administration knew that Russia was having her own serious difficulties. The immense reparations demands laid down by Molotov were known to be due to Russia's own internal situation. Her shortage of consumers' goods was acute. What industrial capacity had not been ruined by warfare

had been restyled to war production. Russia desperately needed peacetime goods—goods she would be unable to produce for a long time. One method of obtaining them was from the vanquished. This way, her people might find their needs at least partially satisfied. However, the looting of Manchuria, eastern Germany, and other areas of Russian occupation did not pay off. Factories torn up by their roots as rich booty could not be re-established. Rail lines leading into Russia from east and west were a year later clogged with rusting machinery which could not be put back into production. It was one thing to haul away machinery, quite another to provide the power and the technological know-how necessary to get it going.

The nub of the struggle over the peace treaties, however, lay in the complete divergence of minds between east and west on the nature of free democratic governments. To the Russians, democracy means a dictatorship of the proletariat. To the United States and Britain, it means free expression of the peoples' will. But the Russians, schooled in the theory that capitalism with its great vested interests represented a threat to the Soviet system, insisted upon buffer states among their neighbors. To the western powers, this was satisfactory, provided those governments were free. To the Russians, psychologically, it could mean only those governments which moved within the Russian orbit and scheme of forceful control.

The dispute over repatriation of displaced persons again represented a basic conflict. Russia, according to the best estimates, had some ten million persons in slave-labor camps. The western powers were utterly opposed to driving political refugees back into these camps and thus easing Russia's labor shortage. The Russians patently regarded every one of their own refugees as a future political threat.

Russia was indulging in the old and comfortable theory that capitalism, represented by the United States and Britain, must inevitably undergo a severe economic collapse which would strengthen Russia and weaken the capitalistic world. It had become

clear in the course of the melancholy round of futile negotiations that Russian calculations were based on the belief that time and chaos would bring her what she desired.

Meanwhile, an internal explosion rocked the Truman administration and dramatized the entire issue in the United States.

Henry A. Wallace as Vice-president of the United States never seemed willingly to understand the legislative process of which he was a part. Shunning the convivialities of the cloakroom, he had formed few senatorial friends, and Truman was not one of them. Wallace was shy, distant, and abstrusely scholarly.

When Truman became President, he felt obliged to keep Wallace as Secretary of Commerce—the position to which Roosevelt had appointed him. Wallace was a Roosevelt legacy. More than that, Wallace undisputably held the support and confidence of the left-wing Democrats and other so-called liberal groups. He was the Democratic party's political catalyst.

President Truman grew genuinely to like Wallace during the meetings of the Truman Cabinet. Wallace learned to speak Russian, and traveled in Russia as Vice-president. He felt, sincerely, that cooperation with the Soviet was not impossible, and he watched with distressing misgivings the development of American foreign policy.

Truman and Wallace talked over Russian relations on many occasions. The President thought that he was making progress in showing Wallace the impossibility of pursuing a course of unprofitable and politically dangerous compromise. Wallace in turn believed, and so advised his friends, that he was succeeding in showing Harry Truman the possibility of reaching accord with Russia. Each man felt to a degree that he was cementing a conviction in the other. The talks were amicable and ranged over the entire field of Russian relations. What was lacking was just that which was lacking in the conduct of international relations, a meeting of minds on principles and definitions. Wallace, the philosopher, was as poorly prepared to state his case for a more moderate policy as Harry Truman, the intensely practical man, was to talk in terms which his Secretary of Commerce could understand.

In September, Byrnes, Vandenberg, and Connally had gone back to Paris to pursue their negotiations with the Soviet. United States policy began to show more realism. It was something of a gamble, but as Vandenberg had said, the nation had reached a point where "failure is preferable to a pretense of success at the price of unsound compromise or appeasement."

At this point, the President of the United States was harassed on every side. A maritime strike had broken out at home. The New York teamsters were striking, and a dozen other labor disputes engrossed the administration's attention. Democratic politicians, fearful of their own skins in a growing Republican tide, poured in on the White House to seek comfort, advice, and help if they could get it. On top of international setbacks, prices, meat rationing, and a dying OPA kept the administration in a dither. Harry Truman was working like a man possessed. The lines of worry, strain, and fatigue showed up heavily in his face.

Leaves were beginning to fall in Washington when Henry Wallace loaded another mountain of trouble on the President's shoulders.

The sincerity of neither man is open to challenge. They had talked but had not understood each other. In July, Wallace wrote a long memorandum to the President opposing the United States' atomic policy, and counseling a more moderate tone toward Russia. Truman glanced at it and sent it to the State Department, which promptly returned it with a "thumbs down" mark. Truman did not attach much importance to the thesis, if indeed he read it closely. He remarked to an intimate that "Henry's written another of his damned memoranda."

The observations of Wallace and his conduct which were soon to have the Truman administration foundering were pointedly characterized in a Senate Republican Policy Committee study of the Secretary of Commerce in 1945.

"It is in Mr. Wallace's approach to his objectives and in the means which he would employ that his main weakness lies," the GOP had concluded. "He is one of those befogged people who believe that because a thing is noble and desirable, it should and



can easily be attained. The nimbleness of mind which permits him to leap without apparent effort over the enormous gap between the ideal and the real also makes it easy for him to conclude that the practical world should be capable of the same amazing performance. For some 2000 years the world has been trying to close the gap between the nobility of the Ten Commandments and the frailties of human beings, without spectacular success, but the Wallaces jump this gap with ease. . . ."

On September 12, 1946, Henry Wallace carried to Truman a speech he proposed to deliver that night before a CIO-PAC gathering in New York's Madison Square Garden. He asked the President to read it. Truman did, but not with the close scrutiny it deserved. He authorized its deliverance. When the State Department saw the text, it instantly protested, but its objections apparently did not reach the President.

At his afternoon press conference, a few hours before Wallace spoke, newsmen questioned the President. Had he seen the speech? He had. What about the quotation, "When President Truman read these words he said that they represented the policy of his administration"? Certainly, the President said. Did that apply to the whole speech? It did. Didn't that represent a drastic departure from the foreign policy which Secretary Byrnes was endeavoring to carry out? It did not; rather, it squared with that policy.

A few hours later, Henry Wallace delivered the address, an open attack on the Byrnes-Truman foreign policy. The speech contained some mild jabs at Russia; others more pointed were deleted in delivery, as Communists in the audience hissed criticism of their philosophical fountainhead.

"We are reckoning with a force which cannot be handled successfully by a 'Get tough with Russia' policy," Wallace said, and again, "We want cooperation and I believe we can get cooperation once Russia understands that our primary objective is neither saving the British Empire nor purchasing oil in the Near East with the lives of American soldiers. . . . We have no more business in the political affairs of Eastern Europe than Russia has in the political affairs . . . of the United States. . . ."

The speech was loaded with other similarly explosive statements. The reaction from Paris was instant. Senators Connally and Vandenberg were ready to pack up and come home. The Council of Foreign Ministers was thrown into furious indecision. Who really spoke the Truman foreign policy, Byrnes or Wallace? The question echoed around the world. Did the United States really have a policy? Who was actually Secretary of State, Byrnes or Wallace?

"We can only cooperate with one Secretary of State at a time," Arthur Vandenberg snorted wrathfully. The dispatches pouring into American news rooms and into the State Department made one thing indisputable: American foreign policy, nursed through so many trials from Potsdam to Paris, had suffered a paralyzing blow. The damage might be irreparable. Certainly the speech and the apparent administration split on policy would stiffen Russian refusal to compromise and might wreck the entire American position so painstakingly built up. Then there were domestic repercussions. The bipartisan foreign policy in which Vandenberg, Connally, and Byrnes were pulling with real teamwork threatened to evaporate overnight. Conservatives within the Democratic Party were affronted by Wallace's theorizing, and sorely distressed at Truman's unhappy blunder. Still, the liberals and radicals within and without the labor groups who clung to Wallace were numbered in the millions; Wallace could not be disciplined or dismissed with political impunity.

An election was just ahead.

The President had bungled grievously. The nation's press was outraged at Wallace and aghast at Truman's own ineptitude. The President then compounded the error. He called in the press, and issued the statement, "It was my intention to express the thought that I had approved the right of the Secretary of Commerce to deliver that speech. I did not intend to indicate that I approved the speech. There has been no change in the established foreign policy. . . ." The statement was as inept as the prior indorsement. And other errors of major magnitude lurked in the immediate offing.

An oppressive silence settled upon the Paris conference. Harry Truman was almost beside himself. The domestic scene represented the worst tangle in decades. If foreign policy cooperation were lost, all would surely be gone.

The uproar following the New York speech had hardly quieted down when from Department of Commerce sources there leaked out the July memorandum which Wallace had written to Truman. Columnist Drew Pearson printed it, then the left-wing New York newspaper *PM*. By the score, other newsmen set up a tremendous clatter, and the press secretariat of the White House authorized release of the letter. Truman tried to call it off at the last minute but failed. The administration rocked from another storm. Wallace wrote of a United States school of thinking advocating a "preventive war" before Russia could perfect its own bomb. The atomic policy of the United States and Bernard Baruch's negotiations within the United Nations on atomic energy were heavily scored as fruitful of suspicion, conflict, and an affront to Russia.

Henry Wallace appeared to be leaping the gap with the greatest of ease. The fat that was left from the fire after the New York speech now burned furiously. Truman called Wallace to the White House, and they talked for two hours and a half while correspondents outside wisecracked that Wallace was asking Truman for his resignation. Wallace left in high good humor. He was not in the least disturbed. The only concession Wallace had given Truman was a promise to speak no more in public until after the Paris conference had ended. The man inside the White House bore the responsibilities of the nation; the man smiling at the newsmen on the steps seemingly felt no great burden. To an assistant who told him he was being criticized for wrecking the bipartisan policy and embarrassing the American delegation at Paris, Wallace answered, "The delegation is stalemated anyway. It can't be embarrassed. Our foreign policy is not bipartisan, but Republican."

Truman tried to reach Byrnes by telephone but, finding the reception was bad, used the teletype system in the White House.

Communications Room. The pressure on the President became terrific. The men around him told him flatly to get rid of Wallace. Wallace was photographed reading on a park bench.

Neither Byrnes, Vandenberg, nor Connally made a flat demand that the President dismiss Wallace. Byrnes did send the President a succinct teletype message in which he suggested that if Wallace were permitted to continue his diplomatic disputations, it was best that he (Byrnes) be allowed to retire at once. The implication was plain. If Truman was not fully determined that there should be no more such Wallace episodes, then the time had come for honorable retirement of the Secretary of State. The President could appoint another head of the Paris delegation, pending selection of a new Secretary of State.

There were twenty-four hours of silence. Then the President tried to telephone his Secretary. The connections were bad and the call could not be put through. Truman then again resorted to the teletype line between the Paris embassy and the basement of the White House.

The conversation between the President and the Secretary of State was clear, polite, and unmistakable. Secretary Byrnes bore no ill will. He was, instead, precise and factual. Henry Wallace's statements had caused bewilderment in every chancellery in the world, had deeply embarrassed the negotiations then being so painfully pursued with Russia. If Wallace were not silenced, the administration, like Janus, would present two faces to the world. If Wallace was to be permitted after the conference to dispute the agreements reached there, then there was little hope that the Soviets would consent to any international arrangements, or that other nations would accept Byrnes's declarations at face value.

Truman, for the sake of world stability and peace, had to reorient his Cabinet to administration policy, or to reorient policy to the whims of his Cabinet member. Unless there was something to give a clear tone to American policy, the damage might be irreparable.

Disappointment, frustration, and outrage were unmistakable.

The President could look at the typed lines and read the end of a bipartisan, united foreign policy.

It was up to Harry Truman to provide the stroke of lightning that would clear the atmosphere.

That night Truman talked for hours with two intimates, Press Secretary Charles Ross and Special Counsel Clark Clifford. He thrashed out the Wallace fiasco through every sequence.

The next morning, Harry Truman made his decision. He telephoned Henry Wallace and demanded the resignation of the man he had grown to like so well. Wallace had thought that everything was arranged. Again they utterly failed to understand each other.

"If that is your request, Mr. President, I will gladly resign," Wallace replied simply.

Thus Harry Truman floundered through another crisis.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FAR EASTERN TANGLE

**E**ARLY IN THE WAR, President Roosevelt summoned Patrick J. Hurley, one of the nation's most flamboyant characters, and assigned him the job of smuggling military supplies into Bataan. The President said at the time, "Pat, I want the nearest thing I can get to a pirate. You're it."

In less than a year Harry Truman realized that Roosevelt had indeed made a monumental choice in this tall, handsome, white-haired man.

Hurley relished the role of mystery man. He conducted his smuggling operations out of Australia. Then, serving as roving trouble shooter in uniform, he conferred with Marshal Stalin, and snooped through Asia, Africa, and Europe, always reporting to President Roosevelt directly. He suffered a shrapnel wound during a Japanese air raid. An adopted son of the Choctaw Indians, self-made millionaire oilman, and former Republican Secretary of War, he also had risen through nearly every grade of the Army to become finally, a major general under Roosevelt, and possessor of a language and box-office manner to put movie stars to shame.

Once, as a boy in the rough Oklahoma coal-mining country, Pat Hurley made a strike. With a two-by-four board he brained a monstrous mule named "Kicking Pete" when the animal had attacked him.

When President Roosevelt made Hurley Ambassador to China in October, 1944, and delegated the impossible job of effecting some kind of truce between organized communism and the extreme reactionism represented by Chiang Kai-shek's Central Government with its repressive politics and secret police, Hurley approached the task with the same finesse he had employed with "Kicking Pete." What he lacked in diplomacy he made up in animal vigor. He clashed first with General "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell

over arming Communists and using them to fight the Japanese. Stilwell was recalled, at the instance of Chiang himself, with Hurley's benediction.

By the time Harry Truman had become uneasily settled in his White House chair it had become apparent that vast, amorphous China was in danger of decomposing. No semblance of unification had been accomplished. Relations between the Communists and the Central Government were as bad as ever. The country was torn by bitter civil strife, and Japanese armies had knifed so deeply into the nation that United States forces were compelled to retreat from their advance air bases.

Hurley was given specific instructions to support the Central Government, to work for unification, and to keep the Chinese in the field harassing the Japanese garrisons. He achieved a measurable degree of success on minor points, but reached a dead end in his efforts to effect a political pacification of the two systems. Marshal Stalin, it was true, and Molotov had shortly before promised Hurley in Moscow that they were not supporting organized Communist resistance to the Central Government. Indeed, they termed their Chinese pupils "ersatz Communists." For his own part, Hurley took it for granted that his personality, driving force, and flourish could compel a welding of elements that years of war and strife failed to coalesce.

Admittedly something had to be done about China. Even if the Chinese Communists were "ersatz," and even if Stalin and Molotov had publicly denounced support of the revolutionary elements, matters had, nevertheless, reached a dangerous impasse at the close of the war. The Soviets agreed that Japanese arms taken from the Kwantung soldiers would be surrendered to the Central Government. This promise the Soviets honored—more in the breach, however, than in spirit. To be sure, they disarmed hundreds of thousands of Japanese soldiers. And they surrendered the arms to the Central Government, but by a novel method. They required the surrendering Japanese to stack their rifles, cannon, and side arms in the village squares of North China, then notified the Central Government where they might be found. When government

troops arrived to claim the booty they found in ten cases out of eleven that marauding Communists, in the meantime, had pilfered the weapons and ammunition and disappeared into the countryside. The arrangement amounted to a gigantic fraud. Each rifle and clip of cartridges rendered more difficult the negotiation of an agreement with the contending Chinese factions.

Ambassador Hurley became tired, ill, and wracked with sinus trouble. He was called home for consultation when it developed unmistakably that nothing substantial was being accomplished by his mission.

Hurley wrangled long and heatedly with his staff. He dismissed nearly a dozen men he felt were obstructing official policy. Moreover, his suspicion grew to conviction that a cabal existed within the State Department and the embassy in Chungking which was sabotaging the United States' negotiations toward tranquilization in China.

Hurley's dissatisfaction was not without substance. One group within the State Department felt that the Chiang government was wormy to the core, that it could never hope to achieve unity of China, and that so-called liberal elements should be strengthened by encouragement of the Communists, if necessary. Hurley stood at the opposite pole. He had berated and browbeaten the Communist leaders. To a degree, he tried the same tactics with the Central Government. But everywhere he encountered immovability in the inscrutable Chinese. Thereupon he complained to the Department of State in Washington that his efforts were being undermined, that reports had leaked to the Communists, that on occasions he could not even depend upon members of his own staff.

When he returned to the capital in the fall of 1945, Hurley, the opportunist and good soldier, told friends that what the country needed was a common-man President like Harry Truman. He was all for him. In softer moments, however, he let it be known that he might not be going back to China. Stories circulated that he would run for Senator from New Mexico—this he later tried unsuccessfully—and that he would henceforth immerse himself in politics.



In any event, he did go to New Mexico to rest before returning to Washington for renewed conferences with Secretary Byrnes.

In late November he talked many hours with Byrnes and, although in ill health, he agreed to return to China. But he insisted that he had not been supported properly, to which Byrnes replied that if anyone had been uncooperative Hurley should name him so that the official could be removed. The conference proceeded amicably, but later Hurley emphasized that he was not feeling well. He needed more time to recuperate. Suddenly Hurley called on Byrnes again and submitted his resignation. They sat down once more to appraise the situation. Byrnes rejected the letter of resignation, but Hurley interposed and finally specified that two men in particular had blocked his efforts in China: George Atcheson, Jr., who had been an adviser to General Stilwell, and John Service in the embassy at Chungking, both of whom had been sent, after a spell of State Department duty, to MacArthur's staff in Japan.

Hurley wanted a statement supporting his actions in China, which he said had been compromised by Atcheson's disagreement with his policies and by leakage of information to the Communists, a series of complaints which the Ambassador did not fully sustain.

Byrnes made note of Hurley's comments and met the next day with War and Navy Department officials to draft a memorandum of policy. But when he returned from the meeting a press aide handed him a sheet of yellow paper. It was a news report torn from a press ticker, announcing Hurley's resignation. Moreover, it was no mere announcement. It constituted a searing denunciation of United States policy in the Far East, characterizing it as looking both ways at the same time—toward imperialism and communism—balking ambassadors, sabotaging negotiations, and making clear sense to no one. In addition, said the Hurley statement, various State Department officers had communicated with the Communists, thus frustrating Hurley behind his back.

Hurley's letter of resignation was still lying on Byrnes's desk, unaccepted. Byrnes was confused, not knowing what to believe. In consternation, he telephoned the Ambassador.

Yes, it was true, Hurley said. He felt he had to resign. "People are shooting at me," he said firmly. "But," the Ambassador offered, "if you say so, I'll go back." No, it was too late for that, Byrnes told him.

In the White House, a mortified President greeted the Hurley statement with one surprised, polysyllabic adjective. It most certainly was too late for Hurley to go back to China, or anywhere else. Truman regarded the Hurley declaration as a direct attack upon himself and his administration.

As in dealing with "Kicking Pete," Pat Hurley had picked up a two-by-four and with one mighty swoop literally brained United States Far Eastern policy.

He was touched off by an attack in Congress by member Hugh DeLacey of the State of Washington, who accused Hurley of being reactionary and reversing American policy.

Immediately, opposition Congressmen on Capitol Hill leaped to the bait. Senator Kenneth Wherry of Nebraska, a fellow Republican, introduced a resolution for a Senate investigation of communism in the State Department, with Hurley scheduled to be the first witness.

Through the next two days, Hurley raged and roared at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, his white hair flying. Acheson, he said, had dispatched a letter from China during his absence, advocating that arms be furnished to the Communists. Not only that, Hurley testified, but when Acheson was recalled from China he had been placed above Hurley in the Far Eastern Division. Also, Acheson and Service had accused Hurley of making his own policy in China. Shouting from the witness chair, the Ambassador told the committee that he had demanded but never received from the department a public statement defining policy and sustaining his position in China.

Indeed not, testified Secretary Byrnes two days later. Hurley had demanded no such thing and, moreover, he had resigned and aired his unsupported charges at the very moment a policy declaration was being considered.

Hurley roared on, shouting down and defying the Senators by

turns. He threatened to "produce the documents" but never actually did so. Obviously enjoying the opportunity of using the committee as a sounding board, he also attacked John Carter Vincent, head of the State Department's Far Eastern Office and a man distinctly out of sympathy with Hurley's views, then broadened his charge to complain that United States policy in China was crippled by Dean Acheson, Assistant Secretary of State.

What Hurley lacked in proof he made up in Olympian language and the finest pyrotechnic display of histrionics Washington had witnessed in years. The Senate hearings were jammed; the newspapers and general press had a field day. As an added fillip to the uproar, Service was fully exonerated in District Court of furnishing confidential information to Soviet sources.

While reporters and spectators in the suffocating hearing room were fairly convulsed by the proceedings, the committee chairman, gray-haired and acid-tongued Tom Connally of Texas, bore in hard.

"The Secretary of State, though, told you that if you did go back to China you would have the wholehearted support of the President and Secretary of State, did he not?" Connally asked.

HURLEY: "Yes, sir."

CONNALLY: "Does that assurance not carry with it the implication that you are out there to represent the American policy, and that they would uphold your hands?"

HURLEY: "It certainly did, but I had had it for more than a year before, and I had never had a public statement of policy."

CONNALLY: "You keep talking about a public statement. You want something in the paper."

HURLEY: "I resent that! That is not true! I want my government to say what its policy is in China, and not be pussy-footing and running away from the truth, and holding me out and letting me get beaten up about it, and refusing to tell what its policy is. No, don't tell me—"

CONNALLY: "All right, calm down, General. This is not a town meeting, although it seems to have been converted into one by the enthusiastic applause . . ."

Hurley then recited that he had asked Secretary Byrnes to make such a declaration of policy, but added, "I do not believe he categorically agreed to do it."

"Well," shouted Connally, pounding on the committee table, "either categorically or 'paregorically' or any other way, did he agree to do it? He did not agree to do it?"

"No, sir," bellowed Hurley.

And that was the rub.

Regardless of the theatrics and partisan politics, Pat Hurley hurled the lightning bolt that cleared the misty air of a befogged Far Eastern policy. The State Department and the Army long before had hit dead center over the advisability of supporting the Central Government or arming the Chinese Communists as a military expedient. There had been no decision as to whether to let the floundering Central Government fall of its own ineptitude and attempt to rebuild a more liberal regime around communism, or whether to attempt instead to liberalize the Central Government as the only semistable and centralized Chinese authority.

Pat Hurley blitzed the murky scene and showed up clearly one thing: the impossibility of temporizing. He created a tremendous commotion around the world, forced the hand of the State Department, and embarrassed the President and Secretary Byrnes into a flat declaration of some policy that all might read and understand.

On November 26, 1945, the day Hurley resigned, Harry Truman was a thunderstruck and worried President. The flash hit the White House and the smokehouse at the same time. Less than twenty-four hours before, the President had stood on the lawn of the Executive Mansion and pinned another Distinguished Service Medal on General George Catlett Marshall, and referred to him as one of the greatest of all Americans. Against his own wishes, and at Marshall's importunate requests, Truman had finally consented to the General's retirement.

For years, Truman had told his friends that George Marshall was a man of the cast and mold of a Lincoln. On George Marshall the new President had no single reservation.

Truman recognized a sculptured granite quality in the face and mind of Marshall: the square, hard jaw and chin bespeaking character and confidence; the firm, straight mouthline consonant with determination and decision.

In Cabinet meetings and private gatherings, Truman was heard to say many times, "If I just had a half-dozen George Marshall's around me!" It was always almost a prayer that somewhere he would find them. Marshall possessed the depth of knowledge, broadness of character, and the catholic mind which Truman sorely needed.

When he became President, Truman taxed Marshall's restiveness by insisting that he remain as Chief of Staff, but finally consented to his retirement only as a last resort.

On the day of the Hurley outburst, Truman picked up the White House telephone and put through a call to Leesburg, Virginia. He was following up a discussion with his Cabinet earlier that afternoon regarding the appointment of Marshall as the new Ambassador to China. The telephone connection went through and caught Marshall unpacking his bags for a life of retirement, rest, and gardening on his three acres. In two minutes, Marshall was appointed and accepted the Ambassadorship. He was still the soldier. But he could not bear to tell his wife. When she switched on the radio and heard the announcement, she sat down in the living room and wept.

The very thing Pat Hurley had demanded, George Marshall got before leaving for China. The Far Eastern Division of the State Department, headed by Vincent, drafted a proposed declaration of policy. This was speedily rejected.

Truman, with George Marshall as his agent, was no longer in a mood to dawdle over the Chinese question. The days of talking out of both jaws at once, he said, were past. Truman, as is characteristic of himself in moments of exasperation, resolved to carve through diplomatic obscurities in one slice. It took a major uproar to galvanize his determination, but now, thoroughly angry at Hurley, the Department of State, and at the repeated failures in China, he designated Marshall to fix the policy. The declaration,

drafted mainly by the new Ambassador, seemed clear and direct, and Truman and Byrnes joined in expressing satisfaction with its major premises.

First, the Chinese must cease hostilities among themselves, the Japanese must be evacuated, and then all of China returned to a unified control.

Second, the Chinese themselves, of all politics and creeds, must get together on "a solution which will bring about the unification of China."

Further: "The United States and the other United Nations have recognized the present National Government of the Republic of China as the only legal government of China. It is the proper instrument to achieve the objective of a unified China." The United States, the statement continued, would assume the obligation of disarming and repatriating Japanese troops. The United States would continue to recognize the Central Government and at the same time would refrain from intervening in Chinese internal affairs. The United States urged and advocated broadening the basis of the Central Government to achieve real democratic representation. Given proper conditions, the United States would be willing to "assist the National Government in every reasonable way to rehabilitate the country, to improve the agrarian and industrial economy, and to establish a military organization capable of discharging China's national and international responsibilities for the maintenance of peace and order."

"The existence of autonomous armies such as the Communist army is inconsistent with, and actually makes impossible, political unity in China," the statement of policy enunciated. "With the institution of a broadly representative government, autonomous armies should be eliminated as such and all armed forces in China integrated effectively into the Chinese National Army."

The President also included a promise that, if China followed the principles set forth, the United States would open up a largesse of loans and credits to assist in the creation of a prosperous and healthy Far East. The declaration appeared not to equivocate, though it actually did. But most of all it failed to square with the

realities of Chinese politics and took no account of the duplicity of Communist diplomacy.

The President was confident that General Marshall, with his enormous prestige and reputation for tenacity, could effect a stabilizing influence in China. On this man he centered his hopes.

General Marshall began his mission cautiously. He was not unaware of the intricate problems of China, the vagaries of oriental proceedings. He had served in the Far East for years as a young officer, and had dealt with the marauding armies of rival war lords. He realized that at the Yalta and Teheran conferences no firm commitments or fixed policy on China had emerged.

General Marshall approached his mission with few preconceived ideas or prejudices. Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer, one of Marshall's ablest officers, was serving as Chief of Staff to Chiang Kai-shek. Wedemeyer distrusted the Communist faction, and while he fairly retched at the doings of some of the extreme reactionaries who dictated the policies of the Chiang regime, he believed that no binding commitment or agreement could be made with the Communists. He did not regard them as mere "ersatz Communists" but true Communists, unworthy of trust. He was aware that the Communist Russian armies in Manchuria had violated their pledge to turn over the Japanese weapons to the Central Government.

General Marshall's first task was to end organized hostilities between Chinese factions. This he accomplished with considerable success. He sent "truce teams" into the disputed areas, and set up a corps of observers who were to report on the first armistice infringement. This system worked with some success for many months. Meanwhile Marshall sought to set up a formula for integration of Communist forces with the National Government armies, in such a way that the Communists would be protected while at the same time counterpoising their effectiveness as an anti-government army in the field. On this, his efforts foundered. The Chiang Government feared that mixing Communists with their own forces would contaminate the political orientation of their own armies, never very reliable at best. For their part, the Com-

munists feared, and with some reason, that once they were split up into small, neutralized cadres and lured into the government armies, they would simply be slaughtered without mercy.

Furthermore, the Communists suspected the United States' motives. They recalled that Wedemeyer had used United States air transport to speed National Government armies into strategic and critical areas, blocking off Communist efforts to seize ports, cities, and rail transportation facilities.

For thirteen months, General Marshall negotiated patiently with every resource at his command. It was obvious that while Soviet Russia seemingly was keeping to the terms of its treaty with China, and withholding aid from the Communists, she had indeed in the field already given such aid by the tacit surrender to them of Japanese weapons as to create a standing threat to the authority of the Central Government in all of North China.

At every turn, the President's negotiator found himself balked. If the Communists made an agreement one day, it was likely that on the next an armistice team would report its violation. If the Chiang Government bound itself on one occasion, reactionaries within the regime would begin working feverishly to upset the commitment.

The vital mistake of General Marshall and the administration rested upon one single point: their belief that it was actually possible to negotiate binding terms with communism. Moreover, together with deception and duplicity, there existed deep distrust bred through centuries of exploitation by foreigners. Try as he would, General Marshall could find no formula that would neutralize the explosive forces between the two factions. Midway in his mission, he flew back to Washington for a long talk with President Truman. They canvassed every item of evidence that Chinese communism was functioning as an armed branch of an aggressive expansionist Soviet policy. They discussed the intense reaction, organized graft, and distrust that had grown like a cancer in the men who advised and guided the Chiang government.

When General Marshall returned to China he witnessed a nation pocked with conflict. Upon his departure for Washington,



fighting again broke out, and each side, communism and the Central Government, accused the other of violating the truce. It seemed clear that each had sought, at propitious moments and places, to seize advantage by sudden assault.

For months Marshall sought to lessen, then to end local war which, unimportant in themselves, endangered the main negotiations.

While he was in Washington, the President confided to Marshall that Secretary Byrnes no longer enjoyed good health. The strain of ceaseless world travel and harangue had told on his heart.

"I want you to be Secretary of State," Truman said. Marshall replied that he would like to make another effort at stabilizing China.

In December of 1946, the President sent Marshall a message stating that he wanted to put his new cabinet plan into operation. It was almost a military order and a military decision. Before he returned to Washington, General Marshall wrote out his China report. It was a confession of diplomatic failure as well as a withering denunciation of the Communists and the Central Government alike. The document bore President Truman's unqualified approval. It shook the Chinese when the man who had penned it was named Secretary of State. No man could have done more. Many would have achieved less. In any event, it was not enough. The Marshall mission was a failure.

"On the side of the National Government," General Marshall reported, "which is in effect the Kuomintang party, there is a dominant group of reactionaries who have been opposed, in my opinion, to almost every effort I have made to influence the formation of a genuine coalition government. This has usually been under the cover of political or party action, but since the party was the Government, this action, though subtle or indirect, has been devastating in its effect. . . .

"The dyed-in-the-wool Communists do not hesitate at the most drastic measure to gain their end, as, for instance, the destruction of communications in order to wreck the economy of China and

produce a situation that would facilitate the overthrow or collapse of the Government, without any regard to the immediate suffering of the people involved. . . .

"Between this dominant reactionary group in the Government and the irreconcilable Communists who, I must state, did not so appear last February, lies the problem of how peace and well-being are to be brought to the long-suffering and presently inarticulate mass of the people of China. The reactionaries in the Government have evidently counted on substantial American support regardless of their actions. The Communists by their unwillingness to compromise in the national interest are evidently counting on an economic collapse to bring about the fall of the Government, accelerated by extensive guerrilla action against the long lines of rail communications—regardless of the cost in suffering to the Chinese people . . ."

America had always advocated an open-door policy in China and firmly respected Chinese sovereignty. To reverse this, even in the light of hard realities, involved difficult decisions. Since the United States had not acted "tough" in Europe, it appeared inconsistent for her to use force in China.

Marshall's parting blast at both the Chinese Communists and the extreme reactionaries within the Central Government merely constituted a "one-two" shadow punch at the entire fabric of Chinese duplicity and distrust. It failed in its greatest aim. It did not lead the extreme reactionaries within the Central Government and Kuomintang party to admit that their two-year campaign had merely served to defeat unification of China. Nor did it provoke the Communists into exposing their own ambitions. The Marshall mission, so hopefully initiated after Patrick Hurley's fiery exodus, foundered not on any dearth of effort or good will. It was beached on the shoals of Chinese politics.

It is perhaps understandable that Marshall, after he became Secretary of State, was reluctant to admit his diplomatic failure, reverse his policy of working for a Chinese coalition, and render support to the Central Government, unacceptable as it might be according to Western standards of public probity.

The convening of Congress in emergency session in November, 1947, brought the issue to a showdown. The House Foreign Affairs Committee had sent a special expert, Dr. William M. McGovern of Northwestern University, a long-time resident of China, to make a personal survey of affairs in that country. Dr. McGovern returned convinced that armed communism was engaged in a full-scale war that would defeat the Central Government unless economic and military aid were promptly rendered. A member of the committee, Congressman Walter H. Judd of Minnesota, once a medical missionary in China, had spent more than a month in the country. His verdict was even more disturbing. Communism would not only sweep China—if aid were not provided for the Chiang Government—it would eventually make Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and the Western Pacific untenable for United States forces. Then, having secured its rear, armed and militant communism would be ready in two or three years at the most to turn and ram its full strength against Western Europe. Judd, almost evangelical in his determination to assist China, had found military men in the Far East acutely aware of this danger.

As one of the highest American military officers in the Pacific had put it to Judd, the United States had lost her historic perspective of national interest, and was on the verge of, if not already irrevocably committed to, an error of irremediable proportions.

The debate over aid to China even overshadowed consideration of emergency measures to help Western Europe. When Marshall somewhat impatiently advised Congress that he was preparing a plan of aid to China—by preliminary estimates some \$300,000,000—the issue was not laid, but only sharpened. In New York, Republican Governor Dewey seized upon the controversy and sharply demanded adequate and appropriate action from the administration. Senator Styles Bridges, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, called in General Albert C. Wedemeyer, who at the President's direction had made a special study and report on China. This report urged immediate military aid. It had been suppressed by Marshall because of the highly critical nature of some of its

comments on the Central Government of China, and no amount of agitation had served to pry it loose. Wedemeyer correctly declined to produce his report for the Senate committee. With equal candor he said that China had to have aid and at once, if it were to survive communism's civil war. He felt China had kept her obligations to the United States, and that this nation had not fully lived up to its promises to the Central Government. The general was in an unhappy position before the committee, but he stated his views with forthright courage:

"A program for Europe should not be evolved disregarding a program for China or vice-versa. . . . If Chiang Kai-shek is a benevolent despot, which he practically is, or whether he is a Democrat or a Republican, that is unimportant. The relevant and important facts are that the man has opposed Communism throughout his history, and he has also stayed on with us as an ally in the war, containing in China one million and a half Japanese soldiers who might have been employed against our men in the Pacific. . . . I think the Generalissimo is sincere in his desire to help his people, but he needs our help, and he should get our help. He is entitled to it. . . ."

This soldierly logic, uttered by one of the best tacticians in the United States Army, served to make up the committee's mind. It cut clear through the ideological hodgepodge of argument about helping a "despotic" or "corrupt" government as against "ersatz Communists" and "agrarians" bent only on liberalizing that government by force of arms and revolution if necessary.

In the House, Speaker Joe Martin and Congressman John M. Vorys of Ohio were adamant, as was Senator Bridges. Largely through the determination of these three men—and certainly not because of any vigor or pressure on the part of the administration—a fund of \$18,000,000, the first and emergency installment of aid, was appropriated for China. Pressure in and out of Congress had forced the administration hand. Criticisms of Senator Bridges, later Senator Taft, and others, here probed into a weak spot of the administration foreign policy. If the Marshall-Truman policy was

aggressively conducted against communism in Western Europe, seemed strangely complacent in another vital theater of the struggle.

Congress decreed a showdown, then pressured for a more comprehensive Far Eastern program. Months later, in mid-February, 1948, and after more criticism of the lack of a China policy, the Truman administration requested \$570,000,000 to assist China. With the Chinese government reeling under Communist attacks, the extent and timeliness of the aid were both open to grave question. Had the administration temporized too long?

## CHAPTER SIX

### TOWARD A FIRM POLICY

**T**HE EVOLUTION of foreign policy in American representative government develops as a slow and often painful process.

The government, represented by the administration, must not proceed too hesitantly lest it lag behind public sentiment and determination. Yet it cannot act too boldly lest it antagonize. It must educate and at the same time lead without jeopardizing support. By 1947 President Truman, his administration, and the American people had undergone two years of excruciating enlightenment. The nation's foreign policy at times had been more cautious and wavering than probably a majority of the people desired, for public resentment began to manifest itself before Vandenberg started prodding the Truman administration into taking a more vigorous, clear-cut attitude.

The Wallace affair had apparently written finis to the Truman administration education. Indeed this internal upheaval marked a definite turn in American foreign policy. Coming as it did just before the election of 1946 in which the so-called liberal and left-wing vote was certain to play an important part, it established the President as a man of no inconsiderable courage and acumen. Undoubtedly, he stuck closely to public opinion in bringing foreign policy around to a sharper tack against Russia.

In Congress, the disillusionment and dissatisfaction, the suspicion of Russia and all her projects grew to a point where mutual cooperation between the administration and the Republican party—soon to come into the majority—became seriously endangered. A great body of Congressional and public opinion conceived the notion that Russian policy was calculated to hamstring, if not to destroy the United Nations, to advance her own ideological-political interests through subjugation of her neighbors in disre-

gard of the United Nations, and to build up a Russian empire for a showdown with western democracy.

Conservative democrats like Millard Tydings of Maryland and Harry Byrd of Virginia, in the United States Senate, were calling for a showdown. They declared that either the United Nations peace machinery should be made to work, over Russia's intractability, or the United States should consider reorganizing the entire international mechanism, let the Soviets go their own way outside the orbit of international collaboration, and risk the ultimate consequences. Tydings was direct. Let the chips fall! Senator Vandenberg was deeply disturbed. He had, at his own political expense, carried the burden of making the existing international machinery a success. Now he was reluctant to take the final step. Yet he had reached a point where he felt that the United Nations Organization must be brought round to where it would succeed with Russian cooperation, or proceed as a democratic world order without her.

Vandenberg had always recognized that, at best, the international machinery would have a long period of trials and troubles. But he had not foreseen the extensive Soviet use of the veto, which blocked major action twenty times within two years. Nor had he, like the public, pinned exaggerated hopes on the United Nations when the charter was so hopefully and overwhelmingly ratified by the Senate. But he expected something better than a year of haggling dispute in the Security Council.

In Japan, General MacArthur pursued a rock-hard realistic attitude. When Russia sought to send in occupation troops, he told them firmly the number he would accept—considerably fewer than the other Allied occupation forces—and he stood firm. Harry Truman, for his part, gave loyal support to the international organization. Every speech he delivered, every action he took rendered allegiance to the cause of international peace. His administration's attitude was far more temperate than that of the Congress.

A reckless statement by a Republican member from Michigan even proposed that Russia be advised that the United States had a

goodly stock of atomic bombs, and intended to use them unless the peace was secured. A Democratic member from Mississippi, at the opposite pole, politically, proposed that the United States sever all economic and relief ties with the Soviet Union until it withdrew from its obstruction of the Potsdam agreement.

It was apparent that with a Republican Congress conciliatory gestures toward Soviet Russia would find even less support or sympathy. Alone, Arthur Vandenberg stood as the enlightened stabilizing influence.

The administration, in formulating its policy, had to frame it within such limitations as the Congress would approve. Indications were unmistakable that Congress had reached a point of extreme irritability. There had been too many unproductive international conferences, too many compromises, too much dispute within the United Nations Security Council, too many Russian vetoes on vital questions. The question of atomic controls had also been bogged in the Atomic Energy Commission for a year with the Soviet Union unalterably opposed to the untrammelled international inspection which western democracy held essential to any adequate safeguards against illegal development of fissionable material. All these things combined to raise the question whether compromise had not ceased to be a virtue.

Secretary Byrnes carried an inordinately heavy load of responsibility and disputation. Moreover, his relations with President Truman, while cordial, became considerably strained by the course of international developments. The Secretary spent most of his official life outside the United States, mainly sitting opposite his Soviet counterpart, the endlessly objecting Molotov. By the fall of 1946, Byrnes' doctors were advising that he retire from his labors.

Under Byrnes, American policy developed from groping and compromise toward firmness. All it lacked was someone to translate the latter quality into specific programs and concrete action. When Secretary Byrnes's physicians rendered their prognosis, it was natural that Harry Truman's mind should turn immediately to General Marshall.



Marshall was appointed Secretary of State on January 10, 1947 at a time when Harry Truman needed him most. Behind him, Marshall left Manchuria looted and raped, and Korea writhing from the communism-versus-democracy cancer of the East. In Europe, he faced the utter inability to approach the terms of the peace treaties for the key pawn of continental politics, Germany. The treaties with Italy, Austria, Rumania, Hungary, and Bulgaria were finally drafted after the utmost travail.

The burden upon the United States of international relief grew enormous. Europe became a direct charge upon the purse of the American taxpayer, and would remain so as long as it was impossible to achieve economic recovery on that continent. The Truman administration, with the aid of Congress, valiantly tried to meet what it considered American responsibilities. Shipments of food and relief supplies to the continent even exceeded expectations. But the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration outlived its usefulness when it became apparent that in many instances its largesses, provided mainly by the United States, were being used to further political aims. At this Congress revolted against further participation.

There was something vital lacking in American foreign policy. Secretary Byrnes, for all his unquestioned ability and devotion, had not provided it. The time was ripe for another, perhaps the crucial chapter. The emergency programs hitherto undertaken for Europe seemed like transfusions: Russia bled the patient at the jugular vein, while the United States poured in plasma at the armpits.

Most important, this bleeding process sapped the resources of the United States and might conceivably render her more vulnerable to an economic downfall. This realization began to impress itself upon Congress. It registered itself with unmistakable clarity on President Truman and his advisers.

February, 1947, was a critical month. Secretary Marshall feverishly prepared for a fifth meeting of the Foreign Ministers in Moscow, and never were his granite qualities better demonstrated. Through a seemingly endless round of conferences and prepara-

tions he even diverted his energies long enough to gain a larger representation than the Soviets had first allowed for the American press, on the simple theory that an informed public opinion was of mutual advantage to peaceful relations between the two countries.

As snow drifted in the nation's capital at February's end, almost on the eve of Marshall's departure for Moscow, another crucial event occurred. Great Britain notified the United States that she would be forced to withdraw her troops and economic support from Greece by the end of March.

At that very moment some thirteen thousand armed guerrillas inspired by communism and supplied from the Soviet satellites Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia, were making armed incursions into Greek territory. The Greek government itself was helpless, inept, and reactionary, even though it had received a confirmation of more than 80 per cent of the votes in a postwar plebiscite.

Russia made demands upon Turkey for joint control of the Dardanelles, the vital waterway leading to the Middle East. Russia also claimed the Italian colonies in Africa, then finally agreed to permit their disposition to be settled either by the Council of Foreign Ministers, or, if that should fail, the United Nations Trusteeship Council. A Russian army stood near the borders of Turkey, and the Turks, sensing mortal danger, kept a million men under arms ready to fight, as the Turkish Ambassador to the United States informed Washington, to the last round of ammunition.

Clearly, if Russia succeeded in establishing a Communist puppet state in Greece by a coup d'état as had been done in Hungary on the eve of United States ratification of a Hungarian treaty, the position of Turkey would become untenable. The Dardanelles would pass under Russian control by default. Militant communism in Italy would be given a stimulus that would surely lead to the overthrow of that nation's democratic government. Then the virus might well spread to France, teetering between communism and democracy, ultimately to engulf the whole of Europe. World War III would be in the offing.

Through piecemeal and uncoordinated international relief programs, the United States contributed in the neighborhood of seventeen billions of dollars of assistance—food, clothing, machinery, supplies, medicines—to Europe. It had done this not because it was enamored of European politics or government, but because its humanitarian instincts coincided with a determination to stabilize Europe against communism. International politics and sentiment stood on the same ground. President Truman had anticipated the gathering crisis a year before when he sent a message to the Federal Council of Churches meeting in Columbus, Ohio. "In our relations abroad," he wrote then, "and in our economy at home, forces of selfishness and greed and intolerance are again at work."

Soon after Marshall became Secretary of State, he and Truman sat down together in the President's office—the great soldier of the world and the unassuming, sincere man who admired him most—to cover the entire field of foreign policy. They gradually reached an agreement. Events showed that the British would pull out of Greece on almost momentary notice. The aggressive march of communism into the Balkan states, its reaching out for Germany, France, Greece, and Italy menaced not only the traditional and historic life lines of the British Commonwealth, but the peace of a continent and above all the security of the United States.

General Marshall reasoned it out in terms of military maps. The first task was to contain this pressure nearest its source, and that meant an unequivocal stand in Greece. This might be dangerous in the extreme. But Harry Truman and George Marshall determined upon a "calculated risk," such as had been taken in many military theaters of the war.

As American foreign policy underwent this drastic reorientation in Europe, the problems of China were for the moment relegated to secondary significance. Japan, where General MacArthur held a firm and undisputed control, was regarded as a position of strength and redoubtability. China would be given such support as could be rendered without jeopardizing United States strength and energies. The decision would come in the west. Greece and

Turkey would be sustained with economic, political, and, if necessary, military aid.

From Turkey, as an ominous but realistic thought, American bombers could penetrate deep into Siberia, ranging over all of strategic and industrial Russia. From Japan, Okinawa, and strategic air bases built there, other bombers could strike deep if worse came to worst. American foreign policy came to be calculated in terms of strategic military advantage.

Marshall and Harry Truman staked much on their decision. It was a cold, raw, winter day when the President called in top Congressional leaders. They met in his oval office. The mood was calm with the finality of the irrevocable decisions taken. Truman was deadly serious. He let Marshall do most of the explaining, but first he assured the members of Congress that the decision was his, and he backed it to the limit. There would be no withdrawal. The decision might mean war. That depended upon the Soviets. But if war had to come, it was better than later, when Russia might possibly have developed the atomic bomb and repaired the destruction of her western areas.

Harry Truman faced the decision. Would Congress, which talked "tough," act the same way?

Communism in Greece and Turkey would be met head on and stopped in its tracks.

The British withdrawal from Greece, and Britain's confessed inability to sustain the diplomatic status vis-à-vis Russia meant that the United States would have to step in and shoulder the load. It meant that the issue of war or peace between the two most powerful nations of the world, after a year of diplomatic haggling and maneuver, was narrowed down to a razor's edge.

The Congressmen were shocked. The burning facts of a showdown acted like an electric charge. But they saw no alternative.

Secretary Marshall was to leave for his first Foreign Ministers' conference. Faint hope endured of effecting any agreements on the German and Austrian problems. Would the decision wreck the Moscow conference? No one knew. Certainly, other conferences before the decision had wrecked themselves.

The President asked to address a joint session of Congress within a few days, a request that could not be denied. Little elation existed on Capitol Hill when Harry Truman ascended the rostrum of the House of Representatives on March 12, 1947, two years and eleven days after President Roosevelt's final address, in which he had reported on his conference with Stalin and Churchill at Yalta.

On that occasion President Roosevelt had said, "I come from the Crimean [Yalta] conference, my fellow Americans, with a firm belief that we have made a good start on the road to a world of peace. The Crimean conference was a successful effort by the three leading nations to find a common ground for peace."

President Truman spoke differently. The common ground for peace had turned out to be quicksand: "The gravity of the situation which confronts the world today necessitates my appearance . . ." he said soberly. "The foreign policy and the national security of this country are involved."

Proceeding, Truman outlined the Greek and Turkish pleas for assistance, their desperate situations, their strategic importance.

"The very existence of the Greek state is today threatened by the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by Communists. . . . There is no other country to which democratic Greece can turn. . . . Great Britain finds itself under the necessity of reducing or liquidating its commitments in several parts of the world, including Greece.

"We have considered how the United Nations might assist in this crisis. But the situation is an urgent one requiring immediate action, and the United Nations and its related organizations are not in a position to extend help of the kind that is required. . . ."

The inference was obvious. If the case were carried to the United Nations, Soviet Russia would again exercise the veto in the Security Council and block assistance to the beleaguered Greeks. Indeed, argued the president, unilateral action by the United States, far from constituting a departure from the international organization, would reinforce and strengthen that body.

Congress listened with stunned attention as the President went

on severely in his flat, undramatic voice. When he had finished, there was no doubt that the Truman administration had made one of its greatest decisions.

"The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will. The Government of the United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation, in violation of the Yalta agreement, in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. I must also state that in a number of other countries there have been similar developments.

"At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

"One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

"The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms. . . .

"I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. . . .

"This is a serious course upon which we embark. I would not recommend it except that the alternative is much more serious. . . . The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world—and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation. . . ."

Up to now, the United States had enunciated no genuine foreign policy. Events demonstrated all too clearly that the Roosevelt method had only too often comprised no more than expediency. It was idle to speculate that if Roosevelt had lived, things would have been different. Roosevelt was not alive. Moreover, the so-called policy which he had established proved to be transient. In twelve years of dealing with Soviet Russia, Roosevelt was unable to

ensure anything more than the cooperation of military expediency. He made major concessions to Russia but in return obtained no firm commitments.

Speculation overlooked one vital point which Russia demonstrated she understood with clarity: any set policy established by a strong nation, even a mistaken policy, is bound to register a reasonable amount of success against wavering indecision. While the Truman administration, in its first two years, groped for answers, the Soviet proceeded on an established line from which she did not deviate: long-planned, hard realism operating against indecision.

The "Truman Doctrine," as it was promptly designated after the President's address to Congress, was drastic but inadequate. Actually it constituted neither a doctrine nor a real policy. Truman asked for \$400,000,000 to sustain and support the Greek and Turkish armies and economies. This was a pittance against the mountain of power and pressure that Soviet Russia was prepared to throw into the eastern Mediterranean struggle.

The uproar caused by President Truman's appeal was immediate and loud. In formulating the program, the President committed a strategic error, it was argued, by going to the United States Congress without, simultaneously, taking the case to the United Nations.

Immediately, the so-called "Henry Wallace school" in Congress, represented by Senator Claude Pepper of Florida, Senator Glen Taylor of Idaho, Representative Helen Gahagan Douglas of California, and others, attacked the plan as being a circumvention and enervation of the United Nations. Confirmed isolationists in the Congress used this as an instrument with which to chip at the program. The attacks became so severe that several days later the Truman administration moved to have the United States delegate to the Security Council, former Senator Warren R. Austin, place the program squarely before the international organization, an effort too belated to have much effect.

It remained for Senator Vandenberg to resolve the dilemma. At

his instance, the legislation was amended to provide that the United States program should be withdrawn upon a majority certification of the United Nations Assembly, a condition that could only come about in the democratic Assembly upon a permanent solution of the Greek-Turkish problem. Vandenberg acted without the foreknowledge or blessing of the administration, and in fact at the outset his amendment considerably irritated the President and his advisers. But Vandenberg knew what was required to secure Congressional authorization of the program, and a proper "posture" before the world. Belatedly, the Truman administration recognized the tremendous psychological value of his proposal to bring the program into conformity with international idealism and organization.

The misnamed "Truman Doctrine" program, authorized and implemented with money by the Congress, represented a first halting step in the formation of what Russia had long had—a realistic, dynamic foreign policy.

"Operation Rathole," as the "Truman Doctrine" came to be called by skeptics, was clearly inadequate. While Congress debated appropriating one and a half billion dollars for programs of widely scattered relief, the administration pursued new measures. Secretary Marshall met daily with the President on the overall diplomatic strategy committee. Marshall had set up this committee in the State Department as a sort of "plans and operations" parallel of the War Department.

President Truman also called in former President Herbert Hoover to make exhaustive studies of the European relief programs and their efficacy. He gave Hoover carte blanche to study the situation and to report his findings frankly. It was the first time in fourteen years that the former President's unquestioned abilities in this field had been utilized, regardless of political considerations. After extensive surveys throughout the world, Hoover reported. Never were the weaknesses of "Operation Rathole" more clearly shown than in the letters he addressed to the chairmen of the Appropriations Committees of the Congress.



"We must do our utmost to aid nations in the recovery of their own productivity," the former Chief Executive wrote. "That underlies peace and progress on earth.

"But the greatest danger to all civilization is for us to impair our economy by drains which cripple our own productivity. Unless this one remaining Gibraltar of economic strength is maintained, chaos will be inevitable over the whole world. . . .

"The burden is beyond our resources unless there is immediate unity and cooperation among other nations to lessen our unnecessary burdens and thus enable the application of our resources to the most effective use."

In two years, the United States provided thirteen billions of outright charity and loans to Europe. The rathole was becoming a bottomless pit.

"The obstruction of the Soviet Government to peace," Hoover continued, "has, during the past two years, imposed billions in expenditures upon us through support of occupation armies and relief to starvation which would not otherwise have been required. However, we can apparently expect little cooperation from that [Russian] quarter . . ."

The solution Hoover proposed was essentially that at which Harry Truman and Secretary Marshall had arrived but which they had not implemented. Help Europe to help itself. Cease relief and begin rehabilitation, with or without Russia's cooperation.

After the appearance of the "Truman Doctrine," Henry A. Wallace toured England and France, denouncing the program as a further step on the road to war, as American "imperialism" and a form of diplomatic saber rattling. His reception was generally polite and his effect undistinguished. But it was beyond argument that he succeeded again in lending weight to the thesis of a sorely divided American foreign policy. At home, the effect of his speeches registered more in noise than in weighty consideration. Senators privately called him an idealistic lunatic or diplomatic saboteur. Few doubted that Truman's ex-Cabinet member was off on a tour tilting windmills.

Wallace would pursue his campaign in Washington, D.C., with

an address delivered a scant six blocks from the White House. An anti-Communist league sought to enjoin him from speaking, and failed. Then the House Un-American Activities Committee sent investigators to spy on the crowd and see if any "officials" attended. The hysterics of peace were rarely more finely played.

Wallace lamented that all of the old Roosevelt team were gone from government, and confessed nostalgia "for the troublesome but exciting days a decade ago when the energies of men and women in Washington poured into the constructive jobs of solving human problems and meeting human needs.

"The atmosphere here should be one of hope and confidence; not frustration and fear," he cried.

"This post-war world can be excitedly peaceful, or we can continue to pursue the road toward war.

"We must find and travel the road to peace . . .

"We must take positive actions to make peace with Russia—is a fundamental to world peace. . . .

"An agreement with Russia must take precedence over the peace treaties with Germany and Austria so ardently sought by Herbert Hoover and Arthur Vandenberg.

The solution was simple, said Wallace. "I would suggest that the President and Secretary Marshall issue an invitation to Stalin and Molotov to meet with them in Berlin for the avowed and announced purpose of drawing up an agreement which will cover all the points at issue between the United States and the Soviet Union. We must settle basic differences with the Russians as completely as possible, or we shall continue to increase the friction which develops in every attempt to settle secondary problems."

It was as easy as that. What was needed, as was suggested in China, was an agreement to keep agreements.

The antithesis of the Wallace attitude had been voiced three days earlier by the retiring Undersecretary of State, Dean Acheson. Juxtaposed, their speeches represented the irrepressible conflict of idealism and realism.

Had Russia kept its promises and agreements? Would a new agreement in Berlin be honored any more than the Potsdam agree-

ment on which the Truman administration initially staked so much?

"The whole course of recovery and the international pursuit of happiness has suffered deeply by the failure to attain or maintain great power unity," Acheson had said. "This has come about by the Soviet Union's pursuit of policies diametrically opposed to the very premises of international accord and recovery.

"In Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, over American and British protests, has used its dominant military position to carry on a unilateral policy, contrary to the Yalta agreements, by which free choice of their destiny has been denied those peoples. In the Far East, the Soviet Union has dismantled the industries of Manchuria, has obstructed economic and political unification of Korea, and has not carried out its commitments for the return of Dairen to Chinese administration as a free port . . . In the Middle East, Persia has been for some years in turmoil, first through Soviet occupation of its northern territories, and then through Soviet-sponsored local attempts to separate those areas from Persia . . . two years after Potsdam . . . by reason of Soviet unwillingness we have not achieved German economic unification or written an Austrian treaty. . . . This by no means exhausts the catalogue. . . . We can do—and are doing—many things. We can expose for all to see the shams and frauds behind which peoples are deprived of their liberty by little groups supported by a foreign power. The methods have not changed basically since the days of Maximilian in Mexico, merely improved in organization and brutality and propaganda techniques. . . ."

Acheson's blunt candor matched Wallace's soaring philosophy. As the retiring Undersecretary saw it, what was needed was not so much a new agreement as a willingness to honor old ones. As Wallace viewed it, what was needed was merely a new agreement to supplant the old ones, a new promissory note from the Soviets.

Even as the two separate voices spoke, the "Truman Doctrine" evolved into a new concept. If the doctrine put the chips down, the declaration of Secretary Marshall at Harvard University on June 4 started turning the hole cards in a vast game of global poker. Soviet

communism held one hand. The United States held the other. The pot was incalculable.

Marshall's diplomatic strategy committee drafted various memoranda of suggested action. William L. Clayton, a hardheaded man of great business knowledge who dealt in world economics for the department, returned from the International Trade Conference at Geneva with a bleak report. Western Europe, starved, broken, wracked by economic anemia and political dissension, was sinking into anarchy.

Half measures no longer would suffice. Only heroic action could keep Western Europe alive, democratic, and stable. In departmental conferences Clayton revealed the problem in its staggering magnitude: five billion dollars of aid per year for at least three years, probably more. The alternative: utter chaos and a probable sweep of communism to the English Channel. "Operation Rathole" was like trying to stem a flood with a spoonful of sand.

Wallace proposed trade and economic assistance to Russia. Acheson proposed that we adhere to our assistance of those who desired to maintain their own freedom. Clayton proposed that we assist all of non-Communist Europe, and quickly.

Truman had started with assistance to Greece and Turkey. Now the project had expanded with such speed and magnitude as to bewilder the American people.

It remained for Secretary Marshall at Harvard University to carry development of the policy to its logical conclusion. The Marshall Plan supplanted the "Truman Doctrine," a phrase quickly forgotten in the rush of events. The Secretary proposed nothing less than that Europe be rehabilitated, not relieved, and that the responsibility devolve upon Europe itself. "It would be neither fitting nor efficacious for this government to undertake to draw up unilaterally a program designed to place Europe on its feet economically. This is the business of Europeans. The initiative, I think, must come from Europe. The role of this country should consist of friendly aid in the drafting of a European program and of later support of such a program so far as it may be

practical for us to do so. The program should be a joint one, agreed to by a number, if not all European nations."

This simple paragraph stung Europe. It brought the hole cards up. Russia denounced the program and compelled her subject neighbors to withdraw. Western democracy accepted this Russian challenge in flat, unequivocal defiance on the part of the British, in uneasy tremulousness by the French, in disquietude and fear on the part of smaller nations. The Soviets regarded the development as unfriendly and said so.

In the war, the United States took calculated risks of enormous magnitude. Secretary Marshall, by July, took a calculated risk of world magnitude. In a very real sense, this was war, a diplomatic struggle of rival ideologies. The pliant policy which bent but did not break at thrusts became unyielding. The conference of Foreign Ministers was another failure. However, for one hour and forty-five minutes Secretary Marshall had talked with Marshall Stalin. Without hedging, Marshall stated the United States' misgivings. Then he had laid down the firm American line.

The Secretary, in a speech on the first of July, 1947, answered the Soviet attacks abroad, and the criticisms at home.

"Our purposes are distorted, our motives impugned, our traditions and institutions decried and smeared," he said. "In countries where a free press operates, as I have remarked, such propaganda has a tendency to correct itself within a reasonable time. But this, unfortunately, is not the case where a free press is suppressed. . . . There could be no more fantastic misrepresentation, no more malicious distortion of the truth than the frequent propaganda assertions that the United States has imperialist aims or that American aid has been offered in order to fasten upon the recipients some form of political and economic domination. . . . No political parties subservient to United States interests have been left behind in European countries to attempt conquest of governments from within. No American agents have sought to dominate the police establishment of European countries. No 'joint American-European companies' have been forced upon reluctant governments . . ."

Communist attacks on Greece were stepped up as American aid started on its way. The Greek government tottered precariously. In the United Nations, Soviet Russia exercised its veto for the eleventh time, on this occasion to block the establishment of a commission of eleven nations to watch over the Greek borders. The President was unshakable. The United States would not retreat from the threat of war in the Balkans. The famed 82d Airborne Division and a division of marines were standing by at alert. United States intelligence, sparked to a high pitch, had discerned that Russia was worried and alarmed.

War or peace might depend upon the attacks of the Communist International Brigade, established within the borders of Yugoslavia and poised for the attack.

Withal, in some ways, the Greek program became a reasonable success. After a year, communism had still not won the victory. The attempt of the guerrilla forces to capture Konitsa, and from there to proclaim a provisional government to which Russia's satellites could accord recognition, failed narrowly. But the forces of communism were neither defeated nor seriously diminished. They had moved over from war against the Greek army to war against the Greek people, with all its attendant atrocities and miseries. Whole sections of the country were sorely beleaguered.

The American mission to Greece, meanwhile, found itself hampered by obstinacy on the part of the Greek government against instituting reforms, and by quarreling within the American mission itself. The Greek government had also shown strong tendencies to be increasingly critical both of the volume of aid and the quality of advice it was receiving.

Harry Truman only hinted at this situation in February, 1948, when he reported to Congress.

"If the guerrilla menace should increase as a result of outside assistance, a new situation would be created which would have to be dealt with in the light of circumstances prevailing at that time," he advised Congress. "While recent developments are adverse, in that they have lengthened the time necessary for Greece's ultimate recovery, Greece is still a free country. . . ."

That was about all that could be said. The United Nations had proved incapable of eliminating the safe haven guerrilla forces found across the borders in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. Money—American money and arms—had stiffened the Greek resistance. But it had not removed, or even diminished the Communist threats. The "Truman Doctrine," implemented, had barely kept Greece alive.

Meanwhile, the area of trouble was expanding.

Starting in 1946, the Truman administration began to maneuver cautiously toward meeting the foreign policy issue of Palestine and the Jewish homeland.

The Jewish problem was heavily weighted with politico-economic considerations, Near East concessions involving untold resources of oil, and Soviet machinations in that area of the world. It would be impossible to imagine a more complicated issue, one more fruitful of domestic pressure and foreign intrigue, one so seemingly impossible of amicable and equitable solution. In 1946, President Truman advocated the admission of 100,000 Jews to Palestine. Republican Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York promptly advocated admission of larger numbers. The British, holding the Palestine mandate, reacted by tightening their blockade against illegal entry of Jews.

Organized Zionism in the United States responded with a bitter, incessant campaign for the partition of Palestine.

This debate was transferred, on United States initiative, to the Assembly of the United Nations. The Arab states warned that they would never acquiesce in the partition. Nevertheless, the United States and the Truman administration were firmly committed. Largely through pressures and arguments brought forward by the United States delegation, the Assembly resolved upon partition. For almost the first time since the United Nations was established, Russia and the United States voted together. The issue was far from settled, however. The Holy Land flamed with assassination, terrorism, and reprisals carried on by both Arabs and Jews. Arab states were feverishly training troops. The British had served notice that they would withdraw from the mandate in the

summer of 1948 and that they would take no part in the enforcement of partition.

The Truman administration was divided on the issue. The division was serious. The State Department was firmly committed to partition. Harry Truman was not certain, although he had approved the course taken in the Assembly. The armed services were known to be deeply opposed to the program. The United States, its own oil reserves greatly depleted, needed Near Eastern oil, particularly in the event of war. A foreign policy that might provoke cancellation of the Saudi Arabian and other Near Eastern oil concessions might prove to be a serious threat to national defense. Moreover, the trouble in Palestine gave Soviet Russia a golden opportunity for intriguing in that part of the world. Russia had been forced to withdraw from Iran. She had failed to straddle the British Empire's life line at the Dardanelles. Nor had the Soviets obtained a foothold in the African colonies. But this new situation gave her an opportunity she would not miss. Russia would take every advantage of it.

The administration could not overlook the potential loss of a vital supply of oil for national defense, and secret maneuverings of communism. There was increased pressure on the administration to revoke the arms embargo it had applied to Palestine. Some score of Senators, even members of the administration, secretly petitioned the President to let the bars down and allow the Jewish people to arm themselves and their kindred for war. The embargo had further alienated American Jews from the administration.

In retrospect it appeared that the administration had acted hastily in the Assembly, without careful preparation, without thinking out in advance all the eventualities that would ensue once the issue was brought to a practical showdown. Even after partition had been voted in the Assembly, the United States policy was far from resolute. The administration was ill prepared to face the threat of civil war in Palestine, loss of oil, and the possible demise of the United Nations by a demonstration of its incapacity to keep the peace. The Department of State insisted that the diplomatic



policy could not be reversed, as the armed services argued heatedly that it had to be.

The administration resorted to the stratagem of carrying the issue on up to the Security Council of the United Nations. It was fighting for time and praying for a miracle at home and in the Near Eastern diplomatic tangle.

From the holding actions in Greece and Palestine, the Truman administration shifted over to the offensive in other theaters of what came to be termed "the cold war" with Soviet Russia. If the leaders of communism thought their case-hardened tactics toward the world would bring dividends of territory, diplomatic victory, and an American retreat, they had reckoned without the Marshall-Truman reaction.

Communism threatened to seize the governments of Italy and France, aided by hunger and the discontent of winter. November and December of 1947 were crucial months. The pleas from Europe became desperate. For weeks the administration tried to find another way, but at last Truman recalled Congress into special session November 17, and asked for \$597,000,000 to feed, clothe, and warm the peoples of France, Italy, and Austria. His request was made without consulting the United Nations, and the storm of protest was instantaneous. Senator Vandenberg quieted this by providing in the legislation that aid would be withdrawn upon a majority vote of that international assembly—a vote which everyone knew would not be forthcoming. The administration concurrently placed its program before the assembly as a matter of information.

In the United Nations Assembly, Secretary Marshall set off another calculated offensive. He asked the United Nations to set up a permanent committee, meeting constantly to investigate situations endangering the world's peace. He indicted the conduct of Russia and said, "The United Nations will never endure if there is insistence on privilege to the point of frustration of the collective will." He outlined a method whereby paralysis of the world Security Council functions by Soviet Russia could be circum-

vented through the Assembly committee, and he thus effectively focused the attention of the world on the Soviet course.

The reaction was violent. Andrei Y. Vishinsky, chief Soviet delegate, attacked the United States in a series of bitter, propagandistic speeches, made mainly for the consumption of the Russian people. He accused the United States of warmongering, of plotting against the Soviet Union, and of having imperialistic designs on the world. The Assembly ignored his fulminations and proceeded with its business.

Meanwhile, Congress by December provided \$522,000,000 for European relief, plus \$18,000,000 for China. In France, the government risked civil war to break an organized strike sponsored by Communists, and Italy likewise stiffened her hand in dealing with strikes and violence.

Ignoring Russian protests, Britain, France, and the United States began setting up a joint administration of western Germany. When Russia objected that this violated the Potsdam agreement for joint administration of Occupied Germany, she was informed the action was made necessary by Russia's own violations, by her refusal to cooperate in establishing over-all economic unity.

Then, using captured German foreign-office documents, the United States revealed the history of the connivance of Hitler and Stalin in the partition of Poland, and the carving up of Eastern Europe in the days before the Soviet-Nazi pact ended in divorce and war. The underground discontent that these disclosures of Soviet perfidy may have seeded in Poland and the Balkans could not be determined, but there was no doubt that Russia had been dealt a sore diplomatic blow. Her answer was long in coming, and weak in its thesis that the Soviet-Nazi marriage was solemnized to gain time for defense, that the United States and Britain had actually financed Hitler, and that the United States had sought to encourage him to attack Russia (the United States warned Russia of the coming attack months before Hitler's armies struck to the east).

Meanwhile, the major offensive against communism was shap-

ing. European governments, meeting at Paris, organized themselves during the summer and fall, inspected their economic and social resources, and drafted up a program of international cooperation to rehabilitate their economies. It was going to be a Gargantuan task, requiring in the neighborhood of \$20,000,000,000 of loans and outright donations from the United States. Russia issued an injunction of abstainer to her captive satellites, thereby seeking to block the cooperative program, and then warned sternly that Britain and France were taking a dangerous step.

It continued to be debatable whether the United States would be financing a recovered Europe that would make a fatter goose for communism to slaughter; whether we were rebuilding productive facilities that one day might be seized and turned against the Western Hemisphere. There was also the grave question of whether we were so severely straining our own economy in rebuilding another continent that in the long run we might dissipate our resources, financial and economic, and render ourselves less able to withstand external threats. The violent Russian opposition to the Marshall Plan testifies that Russia has fear of its ultimate success. Only history can give the final answer.

Before President Truman asked Congress, on December 18, 1947, to authorize a \$17,000,000,000 European recovery program, he directed what was probably the most comprehensive investigation ever made of a contemplated government policy. The economic program submitted by the sixteen European governments was combed fine, and its effect upon this nation's economy was considered with the utmost care. The United States had already provided some \$20,000,000,000 of assistance in various forms to the world since the end of the war. A certain degree of recovery had been accomplished in Great Britain and on the Continent, but without further assistance, governments would still be engulfed in political and economic chaos. The iron curtain could then raise itself, move westward, and fall upon the shores of the Atlantic.

The history of January, 1941, it almost seemed, was being repeated with even greater diplomatic portent. On January 15 of that year, Congress had taken up a bill historically marked H.R.

1776. It was the lend-lease program of President Roosevelt. The United States, faced with the threat of war, was then striking out, attempting to buy a victory. The attempt did not come off. Seven years later, on January 8, 1948, the Truman administration was striking out again, in the midst of a cold war, to buy a victory in the recovery and rehabilitation of governments that would be willing and able to withstand the militant, totalitarian communism of an erstwhile ally.

"During the past eight years, our Government has striven, by every peaceful means at its disposal, to secure the establishment in the world of conditions under which there would be a reasonable hope for enduring peace," Secretary of State Cordell Hull said in 1941. ". . . The present bill sets up machinery which will enable us to make the most effective use of our resources for our own needs and for the needs of those whom, in our own self-defense, we are determined thus to aid."

Had the wheel come full turn? Seven years after Cordell Hull had spoken, Secretary of State Marshall was testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

"So long as hunger, poverty, desperation and resulting chaos threaten the great concentrations of people in Western Europe—some 270,000,000—there will steadily develop social unease and political confusion on every side." Marshall said solemnly, "Left to their own resources, there will be, I believe, no escape from economic distress so intense, social discontents so violent, political confusion so widespread, and hopes of the future so shattered that the historic base of western civilization, of which we are by belief and inheritance an integral part, will take on a new form in the image of the tyranny that we fought to destroy in Germany. The vacuum which the war created in Western Europe will be filled by the forces of which wars are made. Our national security will be seriously threatened. We shall in effect live in an armed camp, regulated and controlled. But if we furnish effective aid to support the now visible reviving hope of Europe, the prospect should speedily change. . . ."

All that was lacking in 1948 was the presence of war itself, and no

one could deny that the cold war of 1948 was getting warmer. As on January 15, 1941, so on January 8, 1948, the chips were coming down. The United States was trying lend-lease in a new guise, against a new threat. Congress, without enthusiasm, plunged into the task. It would authorize a four-year program for Europe, but in spite of Secretary Marshall's ill-advised argument that "There can not be two Secretaries of State," Congress would not let his department manage the program. Senator Vandenberg, by adroit and constructive maneuver, brought out a bill that even the department admitted was a great improvement over its own.

To calm the opposition, Vandenberg amended the program so as to eliminate full commitment of \$17,000,000,000 in advance. To ease the pains of the Congressional economy bloc, he limited the program for the present to one year, and cut the funds for the year from \$6,800,000,000 to \$5,300,000,000. He set up a distinct and separate administrative agency directly under the President, and directed a cooperative program with the diplomatic establishment. Vandenberg saw that the qualifications for assistance were not hard, but that they presupposed a sincere and unremitting effort on the part of recipient governments to help themselves.

Eight years after lend-lease, the United States was moving with its money and resources to buy a victory. The United States was taking the longest of "calculated risks."

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE ATOMIC BOMB

**T**HE IMAGINATION, the daring, and the unity of purpose which marked the development of the atomic bomb far exceeded that demonstrated when it came time to write a peacetime policy governing man's advance into a new scientific era.

The bomb had blown the Japanese out of the war, not so much by the monstrous physical damage it inflicted as by the psychology it created, the sense of withering futility.

It also blasted the world out of one age into a new one. In the main, those who had tapped and harnessed this source of elemental energy for infinite good or evil were young men. Their ages averaged twenty-eight years; some were almost boys, wild with concern at the force they had unloosed. They thought in terms of the future.

The men upon whom fell the task of writing an atomic policy were older men, averaging between fifty and sixty years of age. Their Congressional thinking hinged on precedent. But they dealt with a subject for which there was no precedent. They looked to the past, seeking old and familiar formulae.

It was too much to expect that men of advanced years, untrained in science, ignorant of atomic potentialities, project their minds into the unmapped future. On one side was science, youth, and power. On the other, a yearning for social comfortableness, a propensity for translating in terms of things that were, things that were to be.

Harry Truman had heard but dimly about the atomic bomb before becoming President. His National Defense Committee at one time started to investigate the mysterious and seemingly unproductive outpouring of billions at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and Hanford, Washington. At the request of General Marshall, Chief of Staff, the committee desisted.

Truman learned of the bomb's impending debut soon after entering the White House, during those hectic, frenzied weeks of briefing that followed his accession. He received the nearly stupefying news of its success in New Mexico while he was at Potsdam.

"We have used it [the bomb] in order to shorten the agony of war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans . . ." the President said on August 9, 1945, in justification of ordering the release over Japan of a force that shook the entire world. By that time, he fully realized the import of his decision.

Three days earlier, from his warship returning from the Potsdam conference, the President had issued a statement intended to reassure the world. ". . . Under present circumstances it is not intended to divulge the technical processes of production or all the military applications [of atomic energy], pending further examination of possible methods of protecting us and the rest of the world from the danger of sudden destruction. . . . I shall recommend that the Congress . . . consider promptly the establishment of an appropriate commission to control the production and use of atomic power within the United States. . . ."

America—and the world—then stood aghast at the vista which science had opened. Was this unheard-of power to benefit man or spell his doom? The President's words, intended to allay fears, succeeded only partially.

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, who more than any other man represented the craftsman in statesmanship within the administration, had prepared a memorandum that constituted one of the nation's great state papers. In it he had urged that this devastating force, in peacetime, be placed in civilian hands. This document, read and studied by the President, was not to be made public for two years. It added up to one thesis: a force so devastating, yet so capable of benefiting mankind, must be entrusted to civilian and peaceful development, and not retained solely for military use.

A month after he took his oath of office, the President had ap-

pointed a special committee with Stimson as its chairman to formulate proposed legislation for the peacetime development of atomic energy. Byrnes, as a private citizen, had served on the committee, too. Its membership constituted some of the best men in the government.

However, the alacrity with which the atomic bomb was used in no way matched development of an acceptable policy. Congress, meanwhile, had reached the point of ferment, with Congressional and public opinion generally divided into two contending philosophies.

One group rested its case for national security on nothing short of international controls.

Another group, fearful, suspicious, and less idealistic if more practical, insisted upon military control and development of this energy in the United States.

One, for safety, would go all out for international cooperation and atomic secret sharing. The other, for the same safety, would hoard the secret of atomic energy, and entrust its development primarily to the military services as a weapon of war.

The issue involved was to provide the greatest scientific research and latitude for development, consistent with guaranteed national security. How to reconcile the two, how to combine the lifeblood of freedom of scientific progress with the right degree of secrecy, so essential to national security? This constituted the head-splitting problem that Congress faced.

President Truman waited precious months, until October 3, 1945, before submitting his own program. Meanwhile, Congressional and public uneasiness reached near hysteria. The President said: "Never in history has society been confronted with a power so full of promise for the future of man and for the peace of the world. I think I express the faith of the American people when I say that we can use the knowledge we have won, not for the devastation of war, but for the future welfare of humanity. . . .

"Atomic force in ignorant or evil hands could inflict untold disaster upon the nation and the world. Society cannot hope even to protect itself—much less to realize the benefits of the dis-



covery—unless prompt action is taken to guard against the hazard of misuse . . .”

The President proposed establishment of a commission appointed by himself to follow the directives and principles which Congress should lay down. These included: government ownership of all strategic material, rigid license provisions for all atomic experimentations, and stiff penalties for all violations of regulations.

This message was the signal for the most audacious scramble for authority in recent Congressional history. Senator Ed Johnson of Colorado, and Andrew Jackson May of Kentucky, the chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee, immediately introduced the legislation prepared by the President's committee. This legislation, innocent enough on its face, would have opened the way for military control of peacetime development of atomic energy, through an administrator and assistant administrator appointed by the commission with practically unlimited powers to carry out such policy directives as the commission might conceive.

The commission members themselves would have served only part time, while the grist of day-to-day work would have been performed by the administrators. The bill specifically provided that these key officials might be military men, serving without jeopardy to their retirement and other military rights.

The implication was not so apparent on the surface. But it represented a direct bid by the military branches for control of peacetime development of atomic energy. The powers of seizure and confiscation proposed in the legislation extended to entire industries, and went beyond anything proposed even in wartime. The bill was as sweeping in its content as it was ill-advised in its direction.

Scarcely a Congressional committee debated any other subject. The Senate hearings on establishment of a National Science Foundation resolved themselves into a discussion of the awfulness of the bomb and what to do about it. The Senate Military Affairs Committee stirred apprehensively, with the Johnson bill before it. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, because of the inter-

national consequences involved, contested for jurisdiction over the subject. The House Military Affairs Committee, confronted with the May bill, drove ahead with reckless speed, and little regard to dissenting counsel, toward approval of the legislation.

In the Senate, a short, hard-faced man from Connecticut, a former criminal prosecutor for the Department of Justice, Senator Brien McMahon, submitted a resolution to create a special committee on atomic energy. His resolution was passed not so much because of his own pleadings as by reason of a jurisdictional dispute between the Military Affairs and the Foreign Relations Committees.

Congress literally was scared out of its wits, and the flesh crept when Major General Leslie R. Groves, administrator of the famed Manhattan Project, said, in testifying before the House committee, "We are flirting with national suicide if this thing gets out of control. If one mistake is made we may face a national disaster."

It was as plain as an open secret that enactment of the May-Johnson bill would, through the administrators, continue military control. In this connection a lamentable lack of trust existed between General Groves and the scientists who primarily had developed the bomb. The scientists regarded the General as something of an ignoramus in scientific matters, a soldier with a dictator complex, given to harboring absurd secrecies in a field in which secrecy could not forever obtain, interested only in the military application of atomic science, and the man destined—of all others—to become the administrator if the bill should pass.

The General, on the other hand, was thought to regard the scientists as a coterie of wild-haired and woolgathering theorists, who might readily gossip away the most vital secrets of national defense and the bomb.

The scientists who had worked under General Groves and his rigid system of compartmentalization complained that they were not even allowed to discuss mutual problems and findings with other scientists working on the same project. Groves argued privately to the Senators that therein lay safety and secrecy. After all, that was how the bomb's birth had been concealed.

When the House committee abruptly closed its hearings after one day given to the War Department proponents of the bill, the scientists reacted with almost radioactive violence. They chipped in from their own slender incomes and opened a small office in Washington. From there they began bombarding Congress with their demand: hear the scientists before reporting any legislation. They carried their campaign into the press and pointed out with penetrating incisiveness the dangers of the May-Johnson bills. They held press conferences, buttonholed Senators and members of the House, until shortly it became apparent that whatever happened in atomic energy, the War and Navy Department bill could not be passed.

Scientist Arthur H. Compton put the whole dilemma clearly to the House Military Affairs Committee, when it was forced, by the strident protests of the scientists, to reopen its hearings.

"The difficulty I see with regard to the present legislation . . . is that whereas this is called a bill for the development and control of atomic power," he said, "almost all of the bill is concerned with the implementing of controls and almost nothing is connected with regard to the implementing of the development of atomic power. . . ."

"Scientists are not used to being controlled; they are not used to regimentation," added Dr. J. R. Oppenheimer, the young and able director of the Los Alamos, New Mexico, laboratory and the man who might be called the prime contributor to the success of the atomic undertaking. ". . . It is in the nature of science that the individual is to be given a certain amount of freedom to invent, to think, and to carry on the best he knows how. . . ."

However, the scientists themselves were not of one mind, either. Dr. James Bryant Conant of Harvard University, Dr. Vannevar Bush, director of the government Office of Scientific Research and Development, supported the May-Johnson bill provisions. Opponents of the measure suggested that Bush and possibly Conant favored it because they had helped to draft it, or because they expected to be appointed to the commission.

As Congressional hearings and debate developed, only one thing

seemed certain; the new commission, whatever and whoever it might be, would hold a virtual life and death authority over the development of American science and possibly the future of American industry.

Meanwhile, as Congress searched for a policy, President Truman sought to extend to the world the reassurances he had attempted to transmit to Congress and the people. In discussing the bomb, he insisted:

"The atomic bomb does not alter the basic foreign policy of the United States. It makes the development and application of our policy more urgent than we could have dreamed six months ago. It means that we must be prepared to approach international problems with greater speed, with greater determination, and with greater ingenuity, in order to meet a situation for which there is no precedent. . . . In our possession of this weapon, as in our possession of other new weapons, there is no threat to any nation. . . . Because of our love of peace, the thoughtful people of the world know that that trust will not be violated, that it will be faithfully executed . . .

"Indeed, the highest hope of the American people is that world cooperation for peace will soon reach such a state of perfection that atomic methods of destruction can be definitely and effectively outlawed forever."

It was a noble hope, but there was plenty of room for doubt. To this feeling the President himself contributed through a tendency to "shoot from the hip," in speaking for the record. Harry Truman had always been frank with reporters. Sometimes his language was cocklebur rough. He never minced words. He carried this policy over into the White House, without realizing its implications. The President's predilection caused him untold embarrassment. It took him two years to learn that "No comment" saves a world of distressful retraction.

This tendency to ad lib off the cuff was never more dolorously exhibited than at Reelfoot Lake, in Tennessee, across the Missouri line from Caruthersville, where the President in early October of 1945 went to rub shoulders and swap stories with old friends. The

President had gone over to the log lodge to relax and to rest with old cronies: Leslie Biffle of the Senate, John W. Snyder, the ubiquitous George Allen, and others. He called in the press, and in a completely candid conference swapped ideas right and left. It was a highly convivial evening, and everyone felt in good spirits.

The atom bomb was uppermost in the nation's mind that month. When reporters began to question him about it, Truman held forth at considerable length and with complete frankness. Atomic science was only one consideration; the theory was known to the entire world. The thing that counted was the know-how, the same mechanical aptitude that enabled an American boy to take a screw driver and repair an automobile or a tractor. That was what the rest of the world lacked; the mechanical and engineering genius. That ability possessed by America—the practical mechanics of atomic application—would not be shared with the world. And the United States would see that this monopoly was retained. When Press Secretary Charles Ross inquired if this was to be off the record, the President reflected a split second, then said no, put it on the record. He was firing from the hip.

There was a wild scramble as reporters jostled from the lodge a few minutes later, to rush out bulletins quoting the President to the effect that the atom secret would be withheld by the United States. A cold shiver went up and down the world's spine. It jolted the man who had not yet formed any fixed atomic policy. He had not yet learned that when he spoke, he spoke not as a plain citizen, but as the leader of the foremost nation of the world.

When hostilities had ended in the Pacific, the Truman administration had, in general terms, served notice on the atomic partner, Britain, that it regarded as terminated the general agreement on collaboration in the development of the bomb. Britain possessed the full general knowledge of atomic development. But the United States held in addition the priceless know-how, and the industrial plant to produce the bomb.

London reacted immediately. The British wished to reach an agreement on the future control of atomic energy. It was this desire which led to the joint Washington agreement of President

Truman and Prime Minister Atlee on November 15, 1945, even as Congress debated the issue, that the United Nations should set up an Atomic Energy Commission under its aegis. It provided that atomic secrets should be divulged to the world, through the commission, by stages, and that the "successful completion" of each stage should "develop the necessary confidence of the world before the next stage is undertaken . . ." At the same time, effective safeguards would have to be rigidly enforced.

This news appeared reassuring, and disquiet was not raised anew until a month later when Secretary Byrnes at the Moscow meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, December 16, 1945, reached an agreement on the establishment of the atomic energy commission under the United Nations Security Council. This at least momentarily shook Harry Truman's confidence, and outraged Vandenberg, on the grounds that insufficient insurance was provided against the disclosure of atomic secrets.

Placing the atomic commission under the Security Council rendered it subject to the Soviet veto. The matter of "effective safeguards by way of inspection and other means to protect complying states against the hazards of violations and evasions [of safety regulations]" specified in the Truman-Atlee statement was incorporated in the Moscow proposals, but in no way guaranteed.

At home, meanwhile, the Senate established the Special Atomic Energy Committee as proposed by McMahon of Connecticut, who, although a freshman Senator, was appointed chairman after a tug of war of Senatorial jealousies. The event provided a happy circumstance for the development of an atomic energy policy. At the same time, the May bill, counterpart of the Johnson bill in the Senate, was arrested in its headlong progress through the House. In fact, the Republican minority of the House committee was, in the meantime, organized for a last-ditch fight to kill the measure.

"We fully recognize that there must be a measure of secrecy and regulation, with rigid controls," the minority group said, "but we are far from convinced that any emergency would warrant the surrender by Congress to the arbitrary and limitless powers sought by this bill. Though we are in the dawn of the atomic age, there

is no place in our democratic society for a measure of this kind . . ."

Senator McMahon introduced an entirely different bill, drafted in cooperation with the scientists and leading educators attached to the atomic experiment projects at the University of Chicago. McMahon's bill provided for civilian control, through a full-time commission of five members, their energies and interests being confined to only the immediate task. They would devote full time to research, development, and application of atomic policies devised by them. It offered atomic energy lock, stock, and barrel, including ownership, production, and control of all bombs, to the civilian agency. Military functions were reduced to the status of consultation and liaison, and no more.

The McMahon bill drew the lines of contest between civilian and military control. The Senate committee, numbering among its members some of the best men in the upper chamber, proceeded deliberately. It first held exhaustive hearings on the general subject of atomic energy, "educating itself," as McMahon expressed it. The committee also employed as its scientific adviser a top-flight man of science, Dr. Edward U. Condon, of the National Bureau of Standards.

A clear divergence of opinion existed in the Senate committee, a majority of whose members leaned strongly to military participation in the controls, for the very reasons expressed by the most able Senator Eugene Millikin of Colorado.

"We have a weapon," Senator Millikin said. "In view of the present state of the world, we do not feel that we should let go of this weapon, but the moment that we have a sign that is a durable sign and a dependable sign, something on which we can shape our national policy, then we will make this thing known to the world . . ."

"All of these things that disturb the world—there is no use of rehashing them; you know what they are as well as I—have been brought into being regardless of the bomb. There isn't the faintest assurance that they will be eliminated regardless of what happens

to the bomb at the moment. . . . The ambition of some nations for warm-water ports is an age-old ambition, and it will never be forsaken. It cannot be forsaken in the national interest of those nations. Now that ambition arose independent of the atomic bomb. Is there any demonstrable evidence that it will be forsaken by anything we do about the atomic bomb?

"Since the atomic bomb has been in existence and has been used, there have been new developments in the international situation, despite our possession of the bomb, that greatly threaten the peace of the world . . . I repeat, since the bomb was exploded, I could mention a half-dozen things that have been injected into the world picture that are war breeding, and that there is no reason to believe that there will be any retraction of them despite the bomb, or what we do about it. If these things go on when we keep the bomb in our possession, is there less likelihood that they will go on if we share the bomb?"

Science could give no concrete assurance on this score.

Senator McMahon admitted that the only point of agreement he had been able to reach with General Groves—and their conflict of opinion had soon crystallized—was that Congress ought at once to set some domestic policy on atomic development. In this connection Groves favored strong military representation on the commission. McMahon insisted that the commission be entirely civilian without military controls in any degree.

Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal proposed an alternative commission composed of the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, the Vice-president when there was a Vice-president, all serving ex-officio, and four members appointed by the President. His suggestion clearly gave the commission a heavy weight of military representation.

"Are the Army and Navy willing to turn this over to what we might term a civilian commission to decide whether or not the atomic bomb shall be manufactured or used?" asked Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia.

"It is not," said Forrestal firmly.



"Would the Navy object to keeping this under the exclusive control of the military for a further temporary period?" asked Senator Millikin.

"Of course not," Forrestal said. "It wouldn't."

Further along in his testimony Forrestal stated, "All we are addressing ourselves to is the desirability of getting military and other governmental representation on this commission. . . . I submit that it would be, in the present state of the development of this weapon, unthinkable that the users of that weapon should not be represented . . ."

This, in a few words, was the crux of the military argument, shared by General Groves, Secretary of War Patterson, Secretary Forrestal, and Admiral William H. P. Blandy, deputy chief of staff for secret weapons.

Against this view was the opinion of the scientists who so earnestly believed in freedom of research and exchange of ideas.

". . . The scientists," said Dr. Robert M. Hutchins of Chicago University, "although they were willing to submit to restrictions which in some cases amounted almost to those of a concentration camp during the war, would not do their best work, and some of them I fear would not work at all if the regulations and program of the Manhattan District were carried out during peace."

"Science," asked Senator Millikin, "would suffer irremediably if you bottled it up forever?"

"Even then," said Dr. Hutchins, "I suppose there might be a black market in scientific knowledge."

The absurdity of attempting by legislative fiat to constrict scientific knowledge was never better explained than by Dr. Hutchins. The United States, literally, had capitalized on foreign brains to develop the bomb. Basic researches had been successfully conducted in Germany years before. Dr. Enrico Fermi was Italian; Dr. Leo Szilard, Hungarian; and a long list including Danes, British, and Germans were undisputed authorities in nuclear science. "Our [the scientific] contention is that the United States will be able to get further with its own military security with the freest system of exchange, because we can capitalize better than any

other nation on any other ideas that arise anywhere," Dr. Hutchins insisted.

General Groves, meanwhile, actively contacted members of the Senate to expound arguments against the McMahon bill. A former member of the Corps of Engineers, and a West Point graduate, Groves was thoroughly indoctrinated with the military viewpoint. He held two fixed ideas: military importance and secrecy of the bomb. The scientists on both counts stood diametrically opposed. The divergence was basic though sincere.

General Groves insisted, "What I want, and feel is absolutely essential, is a man [as administrator] who has the background and who is not going to forget for one minute that, as long as this is a prime, or the prime, military weapon of the country, defense must come first, and other things will have to come afterward until the international situation is resolved so that we do not have to worry about this as a military weapon."

In short, General Groves said, the Military "has got to keep its hands on the part that is necessary for national defense, and . . . they should not be overruled on matters of policy only by the man at the top, the President, who is after all the man . . . responsible for the defense of the United States."

The Military's reluctance to relinquish control of atomic energy and its insistence that strict military authority be retained would be a red flag of warning to every other nation of the world, the scientists pointed out. It would mark the United States as being primarily concerned with a military weapon. On the other hand, if atomic energy were placed wholly within the hands of a civilian commission, would not military applications be allowed to sink into disuse and retrogression?

Such conflicting considerations disturbed Congress with fears and emotions. The debate raged in committee for months.

Meanwhile, in January of 1946, Secretary of State Byrnes had appointed a committee to study the problems of international atomic controls, in anticipation of action within the United Nations to render safe cooperative sharing of atomic development. This committee, headed by Assistant Secretary of State Dean

Acheson, in turn, had called in a group of consultants headed by David E. Lilienthal, chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority. This special group represented the finest men obtainable in science, government, and industry. Besides Lilienthal it included: Chester I. Barnard, president of the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company; Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, of the California Institute of Technology and Los Alamos Laboratory; Dr. Charles Allen Thomas, of Monsanto Chemical Company; and Harry A. Winne of General Electric. While Congress agitated itself over domestic policy versus international realities, this group addressed itself mainly to the broad aspects and implications of the problem.

From January to March of 1946 they worked in Washington in a pair of undecorated, musty, cobwebbed rooms on the attic floor of a building owned by a trucking association and loaned to them by the Office of Scientific Research and Development. The furniture consisted of a kitchen table, straight-backed chairs, and no rug. The one telephone rested on a window sill. The only wall decoration was the mortarboard cap which Dr. Oppenheimer had hung on a nail after receiving an honorary degree. The rooms remained unswept; they housed so many secret documents that janitor service was suspended. Gallons of coffee were consumed. Cigarette trays piled up. Working hours extended from early morning until late at night; they had to.

This committee had commenced with an amazingly simple thesis: all preconceived notions and theories were to be thrown overboard. They were beginning from scratch. Often the five men passed up their meals in the ardor of discussion and analysis. They started with conflicting views. But out of the tempering process of practical and stable minds they reached unanimity. They toured the atomic bomb laboratories and sweated out uneasy moments of physical danger. They divorced themselves from their families, friends, and their immediate jobs, and literally sank into a mental effort of almost measureless magnitude.

As they toiled in their sparrows' roost, a philosophy of defeatism never entered their calculations. The problems which had confused

Congress and the Military they approached without fixed contentions, and without thinking of them as insoluble.

They spent sleepless nights grappling to devise means of making the bomb safe. Their report, delivered on March 16, 1946, proposed that the entire thinking and procedure of the Manhattan District be thrown into reverse. Fissionable (explosive) material could be denatured by scientific processes. This, however, was not the final answer. The final answer lay in safe international controls.

"It has been recognized that this [American] monopoly could not be permanent," the group concluded. "There have been valid differences of opinion on the time which it would take other nations to come abreast of our present position, or to surpass it; but it is generally admitted that during the next five to twenty years the situation will have changed profoundly.

"International control implies an acceptance from the outset of the fact that our monopoly can not last. It implies substituting for a competitive development of atomic armament a conscious, deliberate, and planned attempt to establish a security system among the nations of the world that would give protection against a surprise attack with atomic weapons. . . . Above all, it involves the substituting of developments which are known to the world for developments by the several nations which might well remain more or less secret, and where the very fact of secrecy would be a constant source of fear, incitement, and friction. . . ."

The committee proposed neither the rigid military application wanted by the armed services, nor the freehanded sharing of atomic secrets urged by those who staked everything on international good will and responsibility. It stood for international ownership and control of all atomic developments, with adequate inspection to disclose any illegal development of weapons.

The Manhattan District had employed a total of nearly 600,000 persons of all political shades and beliefs. The secret apparently had been kept with admirable and undisputed effectiveness. Some minor pilfering of photographs and other material had occurred,

not to be disclosed until more than a year afterward, in mid-1947.

The Acheson-Lilienthal report, as it was commonly called, made no attempt to chart a domestic policy, but lent itself strongly to the deliberations of the Senate committee. In the committee hearings, the conviction was growing that the only solution to the atomic age problem was complete, unequivocal, and irrevocable disarmament.

Senator Tydings of Maryland, a member of the McMahon committee, put it succinctly when he said on January 28, while the Acheson-Lilienthal report was being drafted, "If another war comes, no treaty prohibiting the use of the bomb will prevent its use. . . . It is not, as we supposed, the atomic bomb in itself that we fear at all. What haunts our days and nights with terror is the coming of World War III. We know for certain, if World War III does come, the atomic bomb will come with it, and all will then be gone. So, at long last, we have come to know that the atomic bomb is but a part of our fear. . . . We may be sure that other nations are now working on the creation and manufacture of the atomic bomb and on improvements thereto . . ."

The world, Tydings argued, needed not so much control of the atomic bomb as universal agreement to disarm, including the atomic bomb and any and all perfections that might be made thereto.

For months the McMahon committee wrestled with this one mighty problem of legislation. Scientists had expressed the opinion that while but few nations could carry out the immense and monumentally expensive industrial development incident to the use of atomic energy, nevertheless, experiments were proceeding apace around the world: in France, in Russia most of all, in Sweden, Britain, and other lesser nations. The bomb was a menace that insinuated itself into every consideration, and the Acheson-Lilienthal report, constructive though its approach, had not quieted the underlying fears.

Indecision persisted until February 1, 1946. In the months since October 3, President Truman had kept his silence while Congress deliberated. It is doubtful if he realized all the shades of conflict

Neither Congress nor any other body had ever before been required to write a policy for a new age of science.

The President talked the situation over thoroughly with his advisers, and with Senator McMahon. The Senate committee was gradually swinging away from the idea of military controls. The weight of objections and arguments advanced by the scientists, many of whom said they would not continue to work under rigid, stultifying restrictions, was taking effect.

On February 1, 1946, President Truman showed McMahon a letter he had drafted, and the two went over it together. This letter served in a considerable degree to settle the issues. The President proposed a full-time civilian commission of three members, exclusive government monopoly in the production of atomic materials, government ownership of patents, authority for international agreements on atomic energy, and an acceptable measure of freedom of scientific research under direction and regulations of the commission.

The military problem was resolved by establishing a military liaison committee representing the War and Navy Departments, to advise and take counsel with the commission on all atomic problems relating to military use. In cases of disagreement between the committee and the commission, the President would act as final arbiter.

The commission was finally fixed at five members, a more acceptable figure. In spite of Congressional fears of establishing an unprecedented monopoly, approval was also reached on the broadest type of government ownership and control over atomic materials and experiments. Moreover, the commission received vast authority to make contracts for private research under its direction, in a manner that satisfied science.

It is hard to imagine a more drastic monopoly than that which the government reserved to itself. The most extreme penalties were written into the bill for those who might willfully publish or otherwise disclose restricted and secret data. The government possessed the right to take over all atomic materials, discoveries, and patents, paying a just compensation in return. Because of the

revolutionary nature of the act, Congress set up its own joint committee on atomic energy, to exercise a continuing vigilance over the commission's administration of the law.

The law was not perfect. It eventually passed Congress after a struggle lasting through the summer months. It was signed by President Truman on August 1, 1946. It was not the ultimate answer. That would have to await experience and development. At best they had written a policy which they hoped would prove safe and acceptable for the immediate years ahead. The manner in which the Senate committee, headed by McMahon, had sought to resolve seemingly irreconcilable opinions and requirements constituted an excellent demonstration of Congress working at its best.

But things had begun to go badly in the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission, set up under the Moscow agreement arranged by Secretary Byrnes. It was evident that while the United States held a monopoly of the bomb, Russia and others were engaged in a desperate race to develop and make bombs of their own. Commissar Molotov had promised the Russians they would "have atomic energy and many more things . . ."

Truman appointed elder statesman Bernard M. Baruch to represent the United States. Baruch proposed international control, development, and ownership of atomic material under an international authority. He advocated a rigid system of international inspection requiring nations to yield up a degree of their national sovereignty. In essence he proposed international sovereignty over atomic development, as the Acheson-Lilienthal committee had advocated. The United States would surrender its secrets only when safe inspection controls were established. Congress and the American people, it had been made clear, were set against any other course.

The Soviets for their part proposed outlawing the atomic bomb as a weapon and destruction of the United States' stock piles of ready material. But they declined to surrender their right to veto inspection or preventive action against a nation suspected by the world of violating the atomic arrangements. The Soviet proposal

constituted a decisive weakening of the controls proposed by the United States.

The long months of wrangling between Baruch and the Soviet representatives clinched only one fact: deep mistrust had developed between the two nations. Atomic policy could never be solved on this basis.

The United States would yield nothing so long as Russia might take the secrets and retire behind its "iron curtain" of secrecy. Nor would the United States agree that Russia be allowed to use the Security Council veto as a weapon for defeating efforts at inspection and, if necessary, punitive action.

Russia was clearly engaged in aggressive diplomacy. Her abiding distrust of the professions of western friendship was apparently motivated by two necessities: first, to conceal her own internal weaknesses; second, to minimize the contact of the Russian people with western democracy.

Meanwhile a violent dispute broke out between Henry A. Wallace and Baruch. This dispute started in July, 1946, before the Secretary of Commerce had left the Cabinet. It continued into October, after his dismissal. Again, the differences were basic. Baruch stood hard and fast on the United States' proposition. Wallace insisted on a more trustful approach to the negotiations and maintained that the veto issue was raised unnecessarily. Baruch felt and said that Wallace was sabotaging the United States' position. Wallace replied that Baruch had not been able to negotiate an international treaty while "shadow-boxing about procedural details and avoiding the basic issues . . ." Wallace took the highly ideal approach to the problem and Baruch the intensely practical.

In late October, while the Baruch-Wallace argument still boiled, the President was taking a week-end cruise down the Potomac on his yacht. A score of names had been suggested for the Atomic Energy Commission, and the country had begun to wonder what was holding up the appointments. Over a year had elapsed since the bomb had been disclosed to the world. The law had been on the books since August 1, and still no commission. The President stood at the rail of the yacht, in his lounging clothes and



tweedy cap, and looked at the yellow waters as they sloshed by. George E. Allen, Truman's friend and chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, stood at his side. The President mused over his problem. The Atomic Energy Commission chairman had to be a man of public stature, and experienced in directing huge government enterprise, "a man like Dave Lilienthal, chairman of the TVA," the President said, half to himself.

Within a month, Truman selected and appointed the members of the commission. It was generally agreed that he had exercised good judgment. But confirmation in the Senate would involve trouble, Truman realized. Lilienthal, in his thirteen years with the Tennessee Valley Authority, had incurred the enmity of aged Kenneth McKellar, the senior Senator from that state. Early in his administration, Truman had reappointed Lilienthal as chairman of TVA over McKellar's violent protests, and the Senate had confirmed him. This new appointment to the most important commission of government would not pass unchallenged, either.

It was not surprising that Truman selected Lilienthal. Both men were liberals. Their associations as Senator and TVA man had been friendly and productive of a genuine mutual regard. Truman had always supported TVA. Lilienthal's work on the Acheson-Lilienthal report established the soundness of his preliminary thinking on the subject, and his ability to work with some of the top men in this field. From extensive study he was familiar with the Oak Ridge, Hanford, and Los Alamos plants. Lilienthal was a lawyer of unquestioned ability, a progressive and advanced thinker, and admittedly one of the best administrators of the largest of all the government's power projects.

Other appointees to the commission were: Dr. Robert Fox Bacher of the Cornell University atomic research laboratory; Sumner T. Pike of Maine, an industrialist, and a man of considerable good sense and ability; and Lewis L. Strauss of Virginia, member of the New York banking firm of Kuhn, Loeb & Company. For the fifth member, Truman reached out to Des Moines, Iowa and picked William Wesley Waymack, a shaggy hardheaded editor. The five men had diverse qualifications, yet each one wa

eminent in his particular field. It was not a group of theoreticians or minds of dazzling brilliance; rather a group of solid, hard-working, practical men with mental resiliency, who had backgrounds of notable accomplishment.

On December 31, 1946, without waiting for their confirmation by the United States Senate, Truman gave the commission full authority over all atomic plants and stores, and wiped out the Manhattan District. The new commission moved in, set up shop in the closely guarded Public Health Service building, and dug in for a bitter Senate fight.

Hearings dragged through three months. At one point, while McKellar drove at Lilienthal with insinuations of communism, the proceedings became so unbearable that Senator Vandenberg, forgetting Senatorial courtesy, slammed down a pencil on the committee table and exploded, "This is outrageous!"

Senator McKellar assembled a motley list of witnesses from TVA, mostly discharged personnel who were of the opinion that Lilienthal, as chairman, had been "too soft" on suspected Communists within that agency. It finally came out that of some eighteen thousand employees there were three that could be called real Communists, and those were in minor positions.

McKellar's behavior ultimately offended the committee itself, and became a positive advantage to the chairman-nominate. It also produced from Lilienthal, in a moment of extreme exasperation, one of the most remarkable statements the Senate had ever heard. More than anything else perhaps, it reduced the McKellar campaign to sheer nonsense. As the audience, jammed into a small, stuffy, committee room, listened intently, Lilienthal, never taking his eyes away from the man who had tormented him, said, "My convictions are not so much concerned with what I am against as what I am for—and that excludes a lot of things automatically."

"Traditionally, democracy has been an affirmative doctrine rather than merely a negative one.

"I believe in, and I conceive the Constitution of the United States to rest, as does religion, upon the fundamental proposition of the integrity of the individual; and that all Government and all

private institutions must be designed to promote and protect and defend the integrity and the dignity of the individual; that that is the essential meaning of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights as it is essentially the meaning of religion.

"Any forms of government, therefore, and any other institutions, which make men means rather than ends in themselves, which exalt the state or any other institutions above the importance of men, which place arbitrary power over men as a fundamental tenet of government, are contrary to this conception; and therefore I am deeply opposed to them.

"The communistic philosophy, as well as the communistic form of government, falls within this category, for its fundamental tenet is quite to the contrary. The fundamental tenet of communism is that the state is an end in itself, and that therefore the powers which the state exercises over the individual are without any ethical standards to limit them. That I deeply disbelieve.

"It is very easy simply to say one is not a Communist. And, of course, if despite my record it is necessary for me to state this very affirmatively, then this is a great disappointment to me. It is very easy to talk about being against communism. It is equally important to believe those things which provide a satisfactory and effective alternative. Democracy is that satisfying affirmative alternative.

"And its hope in the world is that it is an affirmative belief, rather than simply a belief against something else, and nothing more.

"One of the tenets of democracy that grow out of this central core of a belief that the individual comes first, that all men are the children of God and their personalities are therefore sacred, is a deep belief in civil liberties and their protection; and a repugnance to anyone who would steal from a human being that which is most precious to him, his good name, by imputing things to him, by innuendo, or by insinuation.

"And it is especially an unhappy circumstance that occasionally that is done in the name of democracy.

"This I think is something that can tear our country apart and destroy it—if we carry it further.

"I deeply believe in the capacity of democracy to surmount any trials that may lie ahead provided only we practice it in our daily lives.

"And among the things that we must practice is this: that while we seek fervently to ferret out the subversive and anti-democratic forces in the country, we do not at the same time by hysteria, by resort to innuendo and sneers and other unfortunate tactics, besmirch the very cause that we believe in, and cause a separation among our people, cause one group and one individual to hate another, based upon mere attacks, mere unsubstantiated attacks upon their loyalty.

"I want also to add that part of my conviction is based upon my training as an Anglo-American common lawyer. It is the very basis and the great heritage of the English people to this country, which we have maintained, that the strictest rules of credibility of witnesses and of the avoidance of hearsay and gossip shall be excluded in courts of justice.

"And that, too, is an essential of our democracy.

"And whether by administrative agencies acting arbitrarily against business organizations, or whether by investigating activities of the legislative branches, whenever those principles fail, those principles of the protection of an individual and his good name against besmirchment by gossip, hearsay and statements of witnesses who are not subject to cross-examination; then, too, we have failed in carrying forward our ideals in respect to democracy.

"This I deeply believe."

The committee sat quiet for a moment. A reporter at the press table whistled softly. After this remarkable statement, there was no doubt that Lilienthal would be confirmed, and with him the other members of the commission.

President Truman had flatly refused suggestions that he withdraw Lilienthal's nomination. When Lilienthal himself suggested that the fight was becoming embarrassing to the administration, Truman still refused to allow the chairman-nominate to step down. Some Senators told Truman the issue would split the Democratic

party. Truman replied that it had already split the Republicans and in any event there was going to be no retreat.

McKellar and his partisans succeeded in carrying their campaign to such an extreme that the committee approved the commission with only Senator Bricker of Ohio opposing.

Then Senator Vandenberg clinched Lilienthal's confirmation on April 3, 1947. Standing at his desk, he addressed a packed Senate chamber as he took up one by one the charges against Lilienthal and, his voice rasping with scorn, exploded them. Admitting that he started the committee hearings with an "adverse prejudice," the Senator said, "I have been driven to the belief that logic, equity, fair play, and a just regard for the urgent public welfare combine to recommend Mr. Lilienthal's confirmation in the light of today's realities."

The first atomic bomb had been tested on July 16, 1945. It was on April 3, 1947, nearly two years later, before the tending task of writing an atomic policy and selecting the men to administer it was concluded.

President Truman, during this time, established himself on the side of civilian controls. He stuck resolutely to the United States formula for international controls, and refused to be shaken by deadlock within the United Nations. He came to recognize the importance and international implications of atomic power, and moved cautiously in framing a policy from the inconclusiveness of his October 4, 1945, Congressional message to his more definitive letter to Senator McMahon on February 1, 1946. He picked a good commission with managerial ability. And finally, in the face of the bitterest of Senate fights, he declined to be stampeded into withdrawing a single nominee. The issue was compounded. A defeat in the Senate could have set back atomic policy six months to a year. Surrender to the opponents of Lilienthal would certainly establish a large degree of political consideration in selecting other commission members. This, in itself, might prove a fatal error. The President refused to compromise. America could look toward the future with some new hope.

*Part III*  
**DOMESTIC CONFLICT**

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### LABOR PAINS

**T**HE NATIONAL MAINSPRING was wound tight when Harry Truman became President in the spring of 1945. Four years of war effort in millions of factories, mines, and on the farms had brought the nation to a point of undreamed production, a degree of money wealth that was dangerously inflationary, and had strained the national mechanism at crucial points. Most of all, America wanted to be rid of controls. It chafed at rationing and pricing and hundreds of other wartime restrictions.

The administration feared vast unemployment when billions of dollars of war contracts were canceled and millions of men and women returned from the services. Like a black cloud the danger of strikes hung over the nation. Overtime pay would cease, the shorter work week would be reinstituted, and take-home pay which organized labor had enjoyed during the war would be reduced as much as 25 per cent. Prices, with reasonable success, had been held in line. But there was no assurance that these controls could be maintained.

Congress itself was restive, with rumblings of a turbulent reassertion of its own authority.

The job was one of unwinding the mainspring, one safe notch at a time, without turning it loose in a backlash that would whip-saw the entire economy.

The beginnings of the problem soon became visible. Within ten days after V-J Day, three million workers were laid off from war factories, with only one million reabsorbed in peacetime production. The forty-eight-hour work week was quickly rescinded, as a means of sopping up this initial lag in reemployment. Wartime controls were abandoned with startling rapidity, to channel materials and manpower into new production. Priority ratings which had allocated materials were rapidly canceled and the National





War Labor Board was empowered to authorize such wage increases as might correct inequities operating against a speedy return to peacetime stability. War surpluses were released for the civilian market. The entire vast machinery of government, at Harry Truman's direction, shifted into a grinding, jarring reverse.

On September 6, 1945, the President submitted a thirty-two page message to the Congress, asking for a staggering legislative program to help reestablish the peacetime economy. Congress had quickly returned from a summer recess to be on the job. But the President asked too much.

The confusion that prevailed in Washington was equally strong in the Congress. The urge was to be done with war. But there was neither the leadership nor the will, in or out of Congress. Truman's message amounted to a compendium of all the programs and liberal themes he felt he had inherited from Franklin D. Roosevelt. On most of these he was to meet bitter defeat.

His unemployment compensation program was beaten, the full employment program reduced. His request for an increase in the statutory minimum wage of 40 cents per hour to 65 came to naught. Selective Service was extended grudgingly. After months of struggle, Congress rejected his request to retain the United States Employment Service in the Federal structure. It was returned to the states. The Fair Employment Practices Committee was killed, after he had asked that it be established by law.

In his message, Truman counseled moderation upon both labor and management, but even then the nation was approaching an almost disastrous period of work stoppages. By bargaining and by striking, labor fought to maintain its wartime wages and working conditions. Management, believing it had taken a back seat under the union shop and other restrictions imposed during the war, became recalcitrant. Both sides were uncompromising.

"Those who have the responsibility of labor relations must recognize that responsibility," the President declared. "This is not the time for short-sighted management to seize upon the chance to reduce wages and try to injure labor unions. Equally, it is not the time for labor leaders to shirk their responsibility and permit

widespread industrial strife. With this objective in view, I shall shortly convene a conference of representatives of organized labor and industry for the purpose of working out by agreement, means to minimize labor disputes."

If the President held no great hopes for the success of the conference—first suggested by Senator Vandenberg—he did not publicly disclose his misgivings. He confided to intimates, however, that it appeared almost beyond possibility to expect that such a diverse group, agitated by so many conflicts, would be able to reach a program that either side could or would accept. At least, the record was being made.

The President set the stage for his conference, with a broadcast to the people just before it met. Perhaps public pressure for a success would help to induce progress.

"This is your conference," he told the representatives of both groups as they convened, "not a government conference.

"Each of you is now a member of the team which the American people hope will recommend definite policy in the field of industrial relations. . . . The time has come for labor and management to handle their own affairs in the traditional American, democratic way. I hope that I can give up the President's wartime powers as soon as possible. . . . This is your opportunity to prove that you can come to understanding and agreement without political or governmental pressure. . . . Our country is worried about our industrial relations. It has a right to be. That worry is reflected in the halls of the Congress in the form of all kinds of proposed legislation. You have it in your power to stop that worry. . . ."

The relaxation of controls, the President reminded both factions, had brought on further industrial strife. "Some of it was expected by the American people in this period of adjustment," Truman said. "But I am sure that they never expected anything like the amount of strife which has been threatened . . ."

Five days after the war ended, the United Automobile Workers were disputing with General Motors over a 30 per cent wage increase. Steelworkers', oilworkers', and rubberworkers' unions followed quickly. America thereupon moved off into two years

of industrial turmoil. By the end of 1945, the nation had lost 38,000,000 man-days of labor by strikes. It was to lose another 113,000,000 days during 1946.

The President, during the late fall of 1945, fell prey to nearly every conflicting advice and emotion that can assail the man in the White House. Even his advisers were in disagreement. Some felt that further concession to labor would have to be made. Others, including Reconversion Director John Snyder, believed the situation called for legislation. The War Labor Board was passing out of the picture. With it all, organized labor remained a vital factor in the political fortunes of the Democratic party in such key states as New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, and California.

The degree of cooperation and unanimity achieved by the Truman administration with the Republican minority in Congress on foreign policy was never so much as shadowed in domestic policy. Standing reasonably well together vis-à-vis foreign nations was one thing. Attempting to reconcile deeply conflicting philosophies in a domestic field agitated and complicated by every consideration of partisan political advantage was quite a different matter. Truman had cheerfully announced when Japan surrendered that politics were in order again, and the Republicans took him at his word.

Meanwhile, the Labor-Management Conference, proceeding along on its own, produced only an advisory committee to consult with the Secretary of Labor, and some minor pious resolutions. Immediately after this evident failure, President Truman asked Congress on December 3, 1945, to write what amounted to hasty, snap-judgment legislation. He proposed that he be given authority to set up national fact-finding boards under government aegis. These would inquire into industrial disputes, and, pending their decision, the currently prevailing status would be retained for a thirty-day cooling-off period.

Congress planned adjournment by December 15. It was too much to expect it would remain on the job to pass such labor legislation. Within three days, both Labor Committees of the

Congress had met and voted to lay over Truman's request until the session convened in January.

The New Year, 1946, was not a happy one for Harry Truman. All around, his administration experimented and fidgeted. Republican ardor grew with each failure, and the cooperation from within the Democratic party lagged. Conservative Democrats dismissed the fact-finding legislation as a weak palliative. The staunch friends of labor within the party considered it too strong.

On January 3, 1946, the President addressed the nation and heatedly criticized Congressional committees for inaction on important parts of his domestic program. At the same time, he confessed the failure of his hopes for industrial peace. The vaunted conference, he admitted, proved barren of results. "As industrial strife has increased, with automobile workers out on strike, and with the steelworkers, electrical workers and packing house workers scheduling strikes very soon, I have been deeply concerned about the future," he said. . . . "I recommended certain fact-finding procedures, which I believe can go a long way toward meeting these problems. I had hoped that the Congress either would follow my recommendations or would at least propose a solution of its own. It has done neither. . . . The purposes of my recommendations have been misrepresented by some of the spokesmen of both labor and management. . . ."

Management objected to the subpoena power the President would have accorded to the boards. Labor objected to the cooling-off provision.

The President and his administration now presided fitfully over an economy wracked with dissension. While perplexing international problems piled up, they in no way seemed to approach the frustration of domestic affairs.

"The only difficulty is that the great public body of American citizens who are not organized find it difficult to make themselves heard," the President added somewhat bitterly. "I hope that the members of the Congress will talk to their constituents while they are at home on vacation, and that immediately upon their return they will really do something substantial about strikes along the

lines I have suggested instead of merely talking about them."

When Congress did return, the President had his answer. His appeal to the people over the heads of Congress did not elicit the public pressure that Roosevelt's fireside chats had always succeeded in doing.

However, the House Labor Committee reported a rewritten bill embracing the President's recommendations, and took it before the Rules Committee. But, at the same time, a small coterie of Congressmen arranged to seize the initiative. Representative Francis Case of South Dakota had no labor constituency, and nothing to fear from anti-labor legislation. Aided by conservative Democrats, Republican Charles Halleck of Indiana, and others, this group performed a cut-and-paste job on labor legislation, concocting a bill of several anti-strike measures pending before the House.

This, with connivance aforehand, they introduced and offered to the House Rules Committee, a highly conservative blend of Republicans and Southern Democrats, as a substitute for the Labor Committee bill. The Rules Committee had, for years, arrogated to itself the unconscionable authority of determining just what the House should consider, and it made use of this power to offer the Case bill as a substitute for the Labor Committee's measure. From that point there was no doubt; the House would and did pass the Case bill; the legislation approximating the President's suggestions being lost in a hot shuffle in the lower chamber.

But, for the Senate, even the President's proposal was too much. The Senate Labor Committee waited a month, until April 15, 1946, then rejected Truman's suggestion and also the Case bill. It reported its own measure to strengthen and expand the mediation and conciliation services, and little more.

While the Senate marked time, the economy of the country ground to a virtual stop. In May, the Foreign Ministers were to meet in London for crucial conferences, and the United States wanted to show a bold face in international affairs. Yet at home the forces of labor and management alike threatened to tear the national economy to pieces.

Congress proved almost incapable of action. The President complained bitterly that the legislative body had shirked its responsibilities. Truman followed a policy of not losing his head in the crush of events, but he seemed likely to lose nearly everything else. Every major industry was infected by strikes. There seemed no solution.

The administration in mid-January had adopted the view that wage increases in the basic industries were feasible, without major price increases. This thesis, reinforced by the Department of Commerce in a hotly disputed study, whetted the appetite of organized labor and antagonized management. Meanwhile, the strikes rolled on in a rising crescendo of economic discord. The first wage settlement came finally in steel: an increase of 18½ cents per hour increase; followed by increases in rubber, electrical, and automotive industries at or near that level. Then came the aircraft industry, meat-packing, aluminum, and oil industries at comparable figures.

Inevitably, in such processes, a showdown arrives. In international affairs it had appeared after the Moscow conference of December, 1945. In labor-management affairs it happened during May of 1946. The Truman administration tried first the formula of a conference, followed by exhortation. Then wage increases were pressured from most of industry, and finally a fact-finding formula was proposed. The weakness of this position was that facts, per se, had never settled a labor dispute. Economic interest, union advantage, the general economic climate, encouragement or discouragement from the administration in Washington, the strength of the bargaining agency as opposed to management, and the ability of the workers to sustain wage losses as against management's operating losses—all these constituted far more powerful factors than mere provisions of collective bargaining.

As a Senator, Truman had embarrassed the Roosevelt administration by sponsoring and pushing through the Senate a resolution declaring for a wage increase for railroad workers. The resolution had been stopped in the House by administration pressure.

Ironically, then, the gage was thrown by organized labor to its great friend, Harry Truman, in the beginnings of a disastrous

railroad strike. The consequences of such a strike were incalculable. Great metropolitan centers would be reduced to starvation, with transportation of vital materials and supplies blockaded, and economic paralysis within a matter of days an apparent certainty.

Since the government's mediation machinery proved unavailing, the White House swung into action, and assigned its top labor adviser and consultant Dr. John R. Steelman to negotiate a settlement of the crisis.

Steelman went through long, weary hours of negotiations without success. In years of such dealings, he had shown himself to the satisfaction of business and conservatives to be sympathetic to labor. The negotiations started in February. By the middle of May it became apparent that a settlement could be reached only by unexpected concessions on one or both sides. These were not forthcoming, and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen announced they would strike on May 25.

At every turn, the Truman administration had sought to keep an acceptable peace with organized labor. It was politically advisable to do so. Now the President went on the warpath. Those of his advisers who would have counseled a more moderate course sensed his indignation and kept clear. He did not take Secretary of Labor Lewis Schwellenbach, an increasingly unhappy man, into his confidence on the fact-finding message. He was not taking him or others into his confidence on general labor matters. When Alvanley Johnston and A. F. Whitney, presidents of the engineers' and the trainmen's unions, talked with the President, they found him icy cold and uncompromising.

The Truman administration had not developed, nor did it seem likely to develop, the labor statesmanship required by the situation. Indeed, it is doubtful that, at this stage, any other administration could have met the issue acceptably. Labor-management relations had drifted to the point of industrial anarchy.

President Truman made a public appeal by radio on the night of May 24. He laid down an ultimatum: either the trains were to be running by 4 P.M. of the next day, or "I shall call upon the

Army to assist the Office of Defense Transportation in operating the trains, and I shall ask our armed forces to furnish protection to every man who heeds the call of his country in this hour of need. This emergency is so acute and the issue is so vital that I have requested the Congress to be in session tomorrow at 4 P.M. and I shall appear before a joint session of the Congress to deliver a message on this subject."

The President, his voice brittle with vehemence, recounted the emergency. Farm produce was rotting for want of transportation; housing was held up by the nonmovement of building material; utilities were starving for want of fuel; returning veterans were stranded; millions were thrown out of jobs; food vital to the hungry of Europe was spoiling on loading platforms. "I am a friend of labor," the President acidly reminded the unions. "I have opposed and will continue to oppose unfair restrictions upon the activities of labor organizations . . ."

"As President of the United States, I am the representative of 140 million people and I cannot stand idly by while they are being caused to suffer by reason of the action of these two men [Whitney and Johnston]. This is no contest between labor and management. This is a contest between a small group of men and their government . . ."

The next day, Washington was a city filled with nervous anticipation. Members of Congress were flushed with excitement, and the air literally crackled in the downtown Washington hotel to which Dr. Steelman had transferred his negotiations.

Shortly before four o'clock, the President left the White House and rode to the Capitol, where Congress had assembled to await his message. Meanwhile negotiations proceeded frantically. Even as the President drove up Constitution Avenue, efforts were being made to put into writing the terms of an agreement which had virtually been reached. The administration had proposed a means for settling the railroad strike, the old and tried formula which had worked in most other such disputes. It embraced an offer of 16 cents per hour wage increase, plus 2½ cents per hour in the place of other concessions asked by the railroad unions. Altogether, it



added up to the familiar pattern of 18½ cents per hour increase. This the two unions had rejected, while eighteen other less strategic unions had jumped at the offer. The engineers and trainmen held out to the last, and trains could not move without their services.

The transportation system of the nation, vital to every consideration of national welfare, was scheduled to be paralyzed on the stroke of four o'clock, the same hour the President would speak.

It was beyond doubt, as Harry Truman entered the House of Representatives, his jaw set, that he was enraged. This was a most painful hour. Although he had supported organized labor to the hilt and fought for better wages for the railroad men, the nation had been plagued with an epidemic of strikes that threatened to destroy the reconversion effort, and the postwar production upon which so much depended.

"This is no longer a dispute between labor and management," he said with indignation. "It has now become a strike against the government itself. That kind of strike can never be tolerated. If allowed to continue, government will break down. Strikes against the government must stop . . .

"I am sure that some of you may think that I should have taken this action earlier, and that I should have made this appearance here before today. The reason that I did not do so was that I was determined to make every possible human effort to avoid this strike against the government and to make unnecessary the kind of legislation which I am about to request."

The legislation which he asked was extreme. He wanted authority to bring injunctions against labor leaders, forbidding them to foment strikes; for authority to strip of seniority rights those who might strike against the government. In the most flagrant cases, the President requested power to draft into the armed services all workers who were then or who might go on strike against the government.

"This legislation must be used in a way that is fair to capital and labor alike," Truman insisted. "The President will not permit

either side, industry or workers, to use it to further their own selfish interest, or to foist upon the government the carrying out of their selfish aims . . ."

Then the President suggested that Congress itself set up a joint committee to study and devise a long-range labor policy, in the meantime adopting the drastic program he had suggested. This program amounted, cried union labor, to involuntary servitude, and nothing less. Worse still, the President reduced the argument to personalities. "This particular crisis has been brought about by the obstinate arrogance of two men," he said. "They are Mr. Alvanley Johnston, President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, and Mr. A. F. Whitney, President of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen."

The House, which had passed the Case bill on February 7, 1946, quickly approved the extreme legislation the President had asked. It did so despite the fact that shortly after the President started to speak, Leslie L. Biffle, the Secretary of the Senate, stepped to the Speaker's rostrum and handed Truman a penciled note on red paper. The President paused, read the note, then announced the capitulation of the two unions. They had surrendered *in toto* to the power of government, but they had yielded so late that for Harry Truman there was no withdrawal. The House cheered wildly at the notice. It then scrambled headlong over the warnings and protests of its more liberal members to pass the rash measure which the administration had prepared beforehand, ready for introduction in the House immediately after the message.

On the other side of the Capitol, Senator Wayne Morse, a pro-labor Republican and former head of the War Labor Board, called the President's receiving the note during his address one of the cheapest tricks of "ham acting" he had ever seen. Morse charged that Truman knew, even as he spoke, that the capitulation had been agreed. The evidence did not, upon examination, support Morse's charge.

The Brotherhood of Trainmen voted a \$2,500,000 war chest to defeat Truman if he should run for President in 1948. One year

and two months later, the union vacated that threat, and concluded that, after all, President Truman's sympathies lay with organized labor.

Instead of passing the President's drastic bill, a coalition of Senators directed and managed by Taft took the innocuous and shadowy labor measure reported by the Senate Labor Committee, wrote it substantially into the form of the Case bill, and then sent it to the President.

Between May 25 and June 11, 1946, Truman underwent a dramatic change of opinion. The legislation he had asked on the former date was the ultimate in labor regimentation, albeit he had sought this authority for a period of only six months after the end of the war emergency, which he or Congress might declare.

Organized labor knocked incessantly at the White House door demanding a veto, and its knocking was not always polite. The millions of votes registered in unions generally, not just those of the engineers and trainmen, were at stake. Harry Truman found a plausible ground on which to veto the Case bill.

"The fact that we are faced with an emergency which does justify the passage of temporary emergency legislation does not, in my opinion, justify us in the adoption of permanent legislation without the study that such permanent legislation needs," he said. The President, even in asking for the extreme emergency authority he had sought on May 25, had recommended that Congress undertake a joint committee study of the labor problem, looking to permanent legislation. He found many faults with the Case bill: that its injunctive and punitive procedures for unauthorized strikes were wrong and "inequitable," bearing unevenly on employer and employee. He criticized the dismantling of services of the Department of Labor and the setting up of an independent Mediation Board. He claimed the cooling-off provisions would not prevent strikes. The President pleaded in his veto message that he had considered the bill dispassionately before reaching an unfavorable verdict, "from the standpoint of whether or not it benefits the public, which includes both management and labor.

"Not one of the major disputes which have caused such great

public concern during the past months would have been affected in any way by this bill had it been law at the time.

"The railroad strike would not have been covered . . . and the coal, steel, and automotive strikes were certainly not caused by an insufficient lapse of time between the unions' request for conferences and the calling of a strike. Each of these strikes would have had the full sanction of the bill. Thus the very difficulties which this bill was presumably drafted to meet have been left untouched by it . . ."

The President used his veto as a reminder to Congress that it had long failed to enact programs which he considered essential to economic peace.

"A solution of labor-management difficulties . . . is to be found not alone in well-considered legislation dealing directly with industrial relations, but also in a comprehensive legislative program designed to remove some of the causes of the insecurity felt by many workers and employers," he declared.

"During the past ten months I have urged the Congress to enact such a program. Among the proposals which I have recommended are adequate insurance against unemployment, health, and medical services for families of low and moderate income at costs they can afford; a fair minimum wage, and the continuance of the price control and stabilization laws in effective form. These measures would remove some of the major causes of insecurity and would greatly aid in achieving industrial peace.

"Our problem in shaping permanent legislation in this field is to probe for the causes of lock-outs, strikes and industrial disturbances. Then, to the extent possible, we must eliminate these causes. Strikes against private employers cannot be ended by legislative decree. Men cannot be forced in a peacetime democracy to work for a private employer under compulsion. Therefore, strikes must be considered in the whole context of our modern industrial society. . . . Legislation governing industrial relations is workable only when carefully considered against this broad background. . . .

"Equality for both [management and labor] and vigilance for

the public welfare—these should be the watchwords of future legislation. The bill . . . does not meet these standards.”

The House, on June 11, 1946, heard the message read and then without a word of debate in praise or condemnation of the President, came within 5 votes of overriding the veto (255 to 135). The Senate declined to pass the drastic measure which the House had whooped through at Truman's urging less than a month before.

Harry Truman's stock began slipping. Logically, the President's veto could be made to square with his demand for temporary legislation. Psychologically, the veto of a much milder bill than he himself had proposed never would carry conviction. Organized labor was elated, though it had not yet forgiven the message of May 25. The rest of the nation was enraged. On one hand, Truman in a fit of anger asked for the most extreme legislation. Then when Congress declined to pass the bill in both chambers and sent him a milder measure, even though on a permanent basis, he vetoed it. Why? Because, he said, it was too extreme!

The charge was made, and stuck, that Harry Truman and the Democratic party were playing politics with organized labor at a time when new labor legislation was sorely needed. The President delivered a death blow to effective labor legislation. At the same time he shattered his own popularity.

The Truman administration, beset on every side, hit the skids.

## CHAPTER NINE

### "TO ERR IS TRUMAN"

**I**F PRESIDENT TRUMAN was determined not to let the Seventy-ninth Congress have its way on labor legislation, the Congress was no less resolved to deny his demands on price control.

Congress rejected Truman's repeated pleas for unemployment insurance, health insurance, medical programs, and minimum wages, all of which the President mentioned as formulas for overcoming the discontent of labor and industrial strife. Congress now intended to reject Truman's request for "continuance of the price control and stabilization laws in effective form."

The pressure in Congress against such controls continued without respite through the war years. The farm bloc, composed of both Democrats and Republicans, long fought to write into price-control measures various methods for raising the parity prices of agricultural commodities, and by this means lifting both the support and market prices. This bloc seemed to have reached a fixation on the scheme of including in parity calculations the cost of farm labor as one way of jacking up prices. Even the boldest dreams of the farm bloc were exceeded in June and July of 1946 when the Congress got down to writing a peacetime price-control formula.

Truman's administration was distracted by wage strikes. The eighteen-and-one-half-cent formula proved only partially effective. The solution lay, in part at least, in holding the price line to ward off a valid demand by labor that wage increases were necessary to meet higher costs of living. As Director of Economic Stabilization, James F. Byrnes had learned what he called "the process of mutual aggravation." Every time the farm bloc attempted a raid, organized labor appeared with new demands to spring the

wage limitations. And each time a slight wage increase was granted to anyone, the farm bloc camped on his White House office doorstep with new demands of price increases.

The Truman administration got caught squarely in this two-cushion process. At the same time the President himself became dissatisfied with the ironclad, unbending policy of the Office of Price Administration and its uncompromising chief, Chester Bowles. Bowles belonged to the liberal wing of government planners which had stayed on through the early months of Truman's administration.

There was no question that OPA's methods and policies had soured. The great weakness of OPA stemmed from the simple fact that the war had ended. During normal peacetime, the public would not willingly submit to the restrictions and rations of wartime. Black markets in gasoline, in meats, clothing, building materials, and other essentials began to flourish. It was in this atmosphere that the Republicans in Congress, aided by many members of Truman's own majority party, determined to end controls as far as possible.

The argument was that it was better to pay higher, legitimate prices and obtain consumer goods, than be robbed by a black-market system. Elimination of controls would stimulate production and the resulting plenitude of products would soon bring supply and demand into line with a consequent lowering of prices to reasonable levels.

President Roosevelt had had his own troubles with Congress on this score. Once, on September 7, 1942, he had threatened to use his executive powers unless Congress passed an acceptably amended price-control law. Congress acceded. In 1943, Roosevelt had twice vetoed bills which he felt would raise prices by forbidding subsidies or adding subsidies to farm parity price computations. He was upheld in both cases. In 1944, he vetoed a repeal of food subsidies and was again sustained.

The Congress which went to work on President Truman's price-control program was not restrained by the thought of veto. The war was won, and economic pressure from manufacturers, re-

tailers, processors, and jobbers was intense, all to the purpose of ending controls.

Moreover, it was true that the government had been unable to control the black markets. OPA's system of making a horrible example of one offender caught from among a thousand violators only increased the anger of the public.

The OPA policy of not allowing price increases on specific items in a merchant's stocks, if he had made an over-all profit the year before, added inequity to indignity. The seeming constitutional inability of OPA to relax on specific items on which losses were incurred, or to yield slightly to the pressure dammed up by four years of controls, undoubtedly contributed much to discrediting the price-control effort. The OPA would not bend; it could and did break.

At all events, the combined pressures of those who would have killed OPA and price control by indirection, those desiring to take care of special industries, and those who firmly believed that the time had come to speed up a relaxation process in government controls reduced to shreds the ensuing legislation, and with it the President's hopes. A Congressional conference committee, working behind closed doors, mangled the bill into worse shape. In four and one-half months, from April, 1946, Congress had written, largely out of ineptitude, prejudice, and political pressure, a thoroughly unworkable measure, one that Chester Bowles characterized as a "booby trap." Democrats and Republicans shared alike in the responsibility.

The bill extended price control for a year. It set up a Price De-control Board with authority to remove ceilings even over objections by the Office of Price Administration. It disallowed a reduction of the prewar profit margins established by retailers and wholesalers on a wide range of refrigerators, automobiles, and such products. It required that price ceilings for manufacturers and producers be based on the October, 1941, prices, plus the average industry-wide unit costs since then. The measure also reduced food subsidies to one billion dollars, about a half of their former level, rescinded the maximum price regulations of OPA over cloth-



ing, by which manufacturers were required to turn out low-cost clothing in the same ratio which had prevailed in 1943 to high-cost garments. It transferred price control on farm commodities to the Department of Agriculture, through an artful mechanism, and in many other respects riddled the price control program.

On the day that the measure finally passed, Chester Bowles resigned. "The bill would only serve to legalize inflation," he said in his letter of resignation, written after he and the President had agreed that Bowles's very presence in government had become a legislative handicap.

Truman was equally emphatic. "In accepting your resignation," he wrote to Bowles, "I want to assure you and at the same time every American, that this administration will never give up the fight. We shall continue the battle against inflation with every weapon at our disposal, and shall not rest until this country has reached permanent high levels of production, prosperity and employment."

The line was drawn. On the day the Senate passed the bill, June 28, 1946, the leaders of Congress went to see Truman—Speaker Sam Rayburn, Majority Leader Barkley, House Majority Leader John McCormack, and the then Senate President pro tempore Kenneth McKellar. They met a man as determined and adamant as they. The leaders argued that it was that bill or none, that if he demanded another bill, he would certainly get a worse one. They pointed out also that he would play into the hands of gleeful Republican obstructionists if he should send up a veto. The President replied firmly that he could not accept a bill that could not be made to work. Nevertheless it was better, the leaders insisted, to let the bill become law, send a scathing message to Congress demanding amendments, and thus pin the responsibility on Congress.

"We explained that it was a choice between this bill and nothing," Barkley told the Senate soon after the White House conference . . . "that all talk of Congress passing a simple continuing resolution was an idle dream . . . that if a continuing resolution were submitted after a veto, every provision of this bill and more

too would be added to it . . . that if there were nothing more in this bill than rent control, it would be worth voting for."

Texas' W. Lee O'Daniel had started late in the week to filibuster until midnight Sunday, June 30, 1946, when the OPA was destined to die. He read hundreds of telegrams, attacked the Truman administration, denounced OPA, then the New Deal and communism, and talked of deep plots against the government.

The bill was sent to Harry Truman on Friday, June 28, late in the day. The President—pursuant to his warning to the Democratic leadership—had his veto message ready.

"This bill continues the government's responsibility to stabilize the economy, and at the same time it destroys the government's power to do so," he said. "We are all weary and impatient of government restrictions and controls. We are all eager for the day when we can pursue our own affairs in our own way. In such a mood there is the natural temptation to remove essential safeguards prematurely."

The President heaped the burden of blame on Republican Senators Taft and Wherry and Republican Congressman Fred Crawford. Taft's amendment required that, in fixing prices, the control agency allow the unit profit which the industry received for its products in 1941. The Wherry proviso extended the same principle through wholesale and retail levels, by providing prewar profit margin levels, regardless of the lowered unit-sale cost and expanded demands for goods. The Crawford provision set up a special cost-plus formula for automobile and appliance sales-price ceilings.

"This bill . . ." the President insisted, "would start prices climbing and keep them climbing. It would start the value of the dollar falling and keep it falling. Far from helping production, it would retard it. In the end this bill would lead to disaster. . . . The provisions of the Taft amendment are complex but they wear a superficial reasonableness. . . . I wish it were possible to tell you exactly how many billions of dollars the American people would eventually have to pay for the Taft amendment and its

companion pieces. To attempt to do so, however, would be like trying to estimate the cost of a fire about to sweep a city before the first building had started to burn. . . ."

The President did submit some estimates. Housing costs would go up 20 per cent; steel from \$4 to \$8 a ton; automobiles from \$125 to \$250 each; household appliances 25 to 30 per cent; clothing about 15 per cent; the latter alone adding \$3,000,000,000 a year to living costs.

If he thought the bill would help hold down food prices and rents, the President said, he would hesitate long before vetoing. But "Our economy . . . cannot be half stabilized. We cannot quarantine inflation. . . . This bill . . . gives only the delusion of protection against rising costs of food and shelter. . . . The spectacular increases in the prices of manufactured goods which the Taft amendment and its companion pieces would cause, right at the beginning, are far in excess of anything which industry needs to earn generous profits and obtain full production. . . ."

"Let us remember," the President said, "that inflation and collapse in the United States would gravely jeopardize our efforts to build the kind of international economic relations that will provide a solid basis for world peace. The whole structure of international prices, currency values, and financial and trade relations is still unsettled. Because of our position and influence . . . inflation and collapse in this country would shake the entire world."

He had, said President Truman, urged Congress to extend price stabilization, in five separate messages since September 6, 1945, and yet "just before the expiration of all price control there has been presented to me, by the Congress, an impossible bill."

That night, appealing over Congress's heads to the people, the President said, "I wanted to sign a price control bill. . . . I came to the conclusion that the bill which the Congress sent me was no price control bill at all. It gave you no protection against higher and higher prices. . . . What I have done is to call a spade a spade. I must now rely upon the American people and upon a patriotic and cooperative Congress to protect us all from the great pressures now upon us. . . . The fight is not over."

Twenty-four hours later, Senator Taft answered Truman. "The President had a choice between a reasonable transition from price control back to the free enterprise system, on the one hand, and the ending of all OPA powers by veto on the other," Taft told the country. "He chose to take all the chances of chaos, followed by speculative rises in prices. He chose this course, having been warned by his own Democratic leaders of the necessary result of his policy. He has repudiated their leadership and assumed to write a law for Congress, although the Constitution of the United States gives the Congress power to state the conditions on which price control shall be continued . . ."

Taft dismissed the President's charges as specious, wrote off the veto as a message following Chester Bowles and the left-wing Political Action Committee of the Congress of Industrial Organizations. It was impossible to keep price control long after President Truman removed all wage controls on V-J Day, Taft said; "Of course, an increase of about ten billion dollars in wages and salaries will produce billions of dollars of increase in prices.

"But the ultimate and unavoidable break-down of price control will result directly from the President's policy, not from act of Congress . . ."

On Saturday, June 29, 1946, the House had received the veto with an air of explosive tenseness. The Senate recessed and streamed over to the Lower Chamber to hear the message and watch the fight. As a clerk read, the disturbed frowns of the leaders deepened.

"He [the President] is misinformed in almost all major statements in this message," shouted Wolcott of Michigan in the heat of ensuing debate. "Only yesterday the President was given more or less an ultimatum by Congressional leaders that if he vetoed this bill he would take the responsibility for ending price control . . ."

"Override the veto," roared young Mike Monroney of Oklahoma, and "we give this country a lost weekend of inflation."

"If we sustain the veto we will get no legislation for some time and chaos will result," pleaded a member from New York State.

"This bill would compel inflation," shouted big Wright Patman of Texas.

When the result of the House vote sustaining the veto was announced, there was a long minute of dead silence. Then Congress plunged into a furious fight to extend OPA twenty days by resolution. Recalcitrants blocked the move, and the House finally adjourned until the following week.

President Truman had taken what he admitted in his public appeal amounted to a fearful gamble.

His audacity had left the nation trembling on the brink of a runaway inflation with Congress split between outrage and support.

Throughout the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the following week, Majority Leader Barkley worked almost uninterruptedly at his front-row desk, writing in longhand as best he could a new price-control bill that would meet the President's approval. The House passed its twenty-day extension resolution, and Barkley rewrote it in the terms of his own bill. It was Barkley against Taft and Wherry, and the issue went to the floor again.

Members were depressed and dog-tired from the morbid heat of the battle and the weather. The galleries were almost empty. The sessions ran far into the night, with Barkley battling his best and with virtually no help at all. He wanted most of all a piece of paper, some sort of bill that he could take into a conference committee again, and there try once more, after defeat in the Senate itself, to write something Truman would approve.

In the first week after the end of price control, the experience was shocking. Some landlords trebled rents, others evicted veterans and rented their properties to those more able to pay higher charges. Butter reached one dollar a pound. Meats and all other consumer goods began to climb. When the Senate had finally passed a bill, Barkley commented wearily that it would "take all the camphor in Washington to cool the backs that were scratched this week."

Wherry succeeded in decontrolling meats and dairy and

poultry products. Then came cottonseed and its products, soybeans, soybean oil, and plastics made from them. Led by New Jersey's Senator Albert W. Hawkes, the rent decontrol group tried to put through a 15 per cent increase, and were beaten. But the grain bloc came back and gathered in a measure of decontrol of livestock feeds. Taft came back with a modified form of his proposal which had drawn Truman's main fire, guaranteeing manufacturers a base profit including the cost of production increases after 1940. The lumber industry got insurance for a guaranteed profit under price control. Tobacco came in for its decontrol. Then pulpwood, and transportation services to a limited degree. Domestic sugar-beet producers were insured increased prices and profits by a curious limitation of subsidies on offshore Cuban sugars. Wherry tried again to guarantee the profits of wholesalers and retailers, but lost. Again, the formula for pricing clothing and cotton goods was rewritten to suit manufacturers. Congress was out to decontrol everything possible.

Senators, shouted Democrat Harley Kilgore of West Virginia early on the morning of July 13, had done a "strip and tease" act, stripping the economy of controls, and teasing the public with the appearance that they still remained.

"What Senator does not know of some old man, some old woman, trembling, tottering toward the grave, waiting every month until that little pension check comes, to be able to pay the meager expenses for their pitiful livelihood?" roared Democrat Claude Pepper of Florida. "Yet we are going to take a part of it away and give it to beneficiaries of the pending measure!"

If the profiteer, growled Republican Morse of Oregon, should see an opportunity to "commit economic rape upon the economy of the country, he has the tendency to do it."

Thirteen days later, after the whole issue had been fought to a standstill behind the closed doors of a conference committee, the Congress sent Truman another bill. He signed it on July 25, but it was hardly a better piece of legislation than the one he had first vetoed. The Taft and Wherry provisos had been eliminated. Rents remained under Federal control. Meats, poultry, butter,

eggs, milk, and grain would be free of controls until August 20, and after that the independent Decontrol Board would decide which ones still needed price ceilings. The government would have to allow "reasonable profits" on manufactured goods, "reasonable profits" that were not defined.

"I have signed this measure with reluctance," Truman reported to Congress. "I had hoped for a bill under which the Government could with full confidence assure the people that prices would remain generally stable in these last few critical months of the transition to a free economy. This bill falls far short of that hope. I am advised, however, that it is the best bill the Congress will pass. It is clear . . . that it is a better bill than the one I was forced to veto on June 29. . . . The present legislation makes the task of staving off inflation even more difficult than it has been in the past. . . ."

Truman took this occasion to remind Congress that in the brief period of no price control, twenty-eight basic commodity prices increased by nearly 25 per cent. Consumers began to hold mass protest meetings. There was indignant discussion of a buyers' strike. The pressures mounted, and there was little doubt that Harry Truman was right when, in his veto message, he had said broadly that goods and products were being withheld from the market in order to take advantage of the expected higher prices. The Senate argument that meats would reappear in butchers' ice boxes was only partially fulfilled.

The dismayed Office of Price Administration struggled manfully to work with the new law. It issued orders in a steady stream. A wide range of consumer goods' prices was increased from 3 to 15 per cent, at a \$350,000,000 cost to consumers. Automobile prices rose almost 8 per cent. Foods, clothing, and other goods mounted, and the best official guesses estimated that the new price stabilization formula written by the Congress would cost the consumers two and one-half billions per year. At the same time, a price board appointed by Truman plunged into public hearings to determine if controls should be reestablished on meats, a vital

item in household food budgets. Meat producers were dead set against it, warned that it would diminish the supply. Organized labor and consumers groups were equally insistent that controls be reestablished.

"We have got to have prices low enough," one woman witness shouted, "that not only the rich can afford to eat meat."

The Decontrol Board, sitting with judicial calm, weighed the conflicting claims and emotions of consumer versus producer. The issues presented were impossible to compromise. Organized lobbies flocked in on both sides. On August 20, the board reestablished controls over meat prices, which had, by that time, risen almost to black-market levels, and above, in some cases.

At this period the crucial 1946 Congressional elections lay just ahead, and the Republican National Committee headquarters on Connecticut Avenue gloated its best. Republicans proclaimed that Harry Truman was falling on his face at every step. Events gave some color to their exaggerated claims. The GOP machine ground out a barrage of campaign material, all of it belittling the man in the White House, his performance, and his program. It centered around the highly effective slogan, "Had Enough? Vote Republican." It capitalized on the public resentment of every remaining control, and on the disaffections of nearly every business group.

Reports stated that the President might make a radio campaign for the beleaguered, fast-sinking Democratic party. But Truman's stock by early September had declined to such an extent that it was no longer a question of having him appeal to the nation; to do so would be disastrous. The Democrats dusted off old transcriptions of Roosevelt campaign speeches and played them over the radio. This amounted to only an indirect affront to Harry Truman, who bore it in the best grace possible.

In the East, the cry came for "Meat, meat!" at any price. Eastern and northeastern politicians from populous states swarmed the White House and told the President he had to take off meat controls again. Otherwise all Democrats might be defeated. The Re-



publicans chortled a chorus of "Horsemeat Harry," "To err is Truman," and "Don't shoot the piano player, he's doing the best he can."

Organized labor applied every pressure at its command to make the price controls stick. Farmers, with a heavy glut of marketable meat in their pastures and feedlots, heard the prediction that, ere long, all price controls must be lifted, and resolved to wait. Let the East go without meat. The flow into the packing pens of Chicago, St. Louis, Sioux City, and other centers dried up to a trickle.

The White House became a place of defeatism. The Democratic campaign headquarters struggled at cross purposes, besieged by a multitude of counsels. The Republican National Committee, led by former Congressman Carroll Reece, sensed a mighty tide of victory for the first time in seventeen years. "It ain't an election, it's a rout," cried Congressman Clarence Brown of Ohio. "This is it!"

A President of the United States should never be an object of pity. The office, with all its power, was cast in a mold of prestige. And yet, by October of 1946, Harry Truman became an object of pity, a man caught in a churning whirlpool.

Democratic orators paraded the Roosevelt program, not the Truman record. The radio blared out the Roosevelt speeches, not the voice of his successor. The party remained the party of Roosevelt, not of President Truman.

"I don't see how any voter who thinks at all could vote for the Reece-Taft-Crawford program," the President told a group of Democratic candidates who visited him on September 24.

Through the first two weeks of October, the Cabinet struggled with the meat problem. The cry for meat became a thundering chorus. On October 14, three weeks before the election, Harry Truman surrendered. He had held out to the last, but there was nothing else to do. It amounted to almost abject surrender. Those Democratic candidates who had been hardy enough to stand up and defend the controls had no forewarning.

Harry Truman's voice was slightly hoarse, strained, and tired, when he addressed the nation.

"I recognize the hardship that many of you have undergone because of the lack of meat," he said. "I sympathize with the millions of housewives who have been hard pressed to provide nourishing meals for their families. I sympathize particularly with the thousands of veterans and other patients in hospitals throughout the country. I know that our children, as well as those persons engaged in manual labor, need meat in their diet."

Actually Americans were eating more meat than ever before.

"Many workers have been thrown out of work by the meat shortage," the President continued. "The by-products that result from the lawful slaughter of livestock are sorely needed. We depend upon these by-products for insulin and other necessary medicines. We depend upon them also for hides; and already some of our shoe factories are closing . . ."

Who was at fault, with "millions of cattle and hogs on the ranges and farms and in the feedlots in this country?" the President asked.

"I assure you that those questions have been the concern of your government for many weeks. The real story is a simple one.

"The responsibility rests squarely on a few men in the Congress, who, in the service of selfish interests, have been determined for some time to wreck price controls no matter what the cost might be to our people. . . ."

They had tried it with the first price control bill which he had vetoed; then they passed another, hardly more acceptable.

"When I signed this second OPA bill . . . I stated that I did so with reluctance. I said further that it fell far short of what I had hoped for, but that a wholehearted effort would be made to make the law work. I have made that effort. I have tried honestly and sincerely to administer this feeble law. . . . From the outset, however, the very forces responsible for the weakening of the law in the Congress have demanded the lifting of even the inadequate controls which the Congress had enacted. . . ."

Even worse, "there are reports of wide-spread disregard and violations . . . Experience shows that this leads to a tendency to disregard the sanctity of other laws. . . ." Price control lacked

the public support so necessary for successful administration of any law. The government had thought of declaring a short price holiday on meats. That would only lead to a temporary feast followed by another famine. A price increase had been considered. "This would be ineffective," said Truman, "because the livestock would still be held back in the expectation of the lifting of controls and even higher prices." Seizure of the packing plants had been discussed too, but "the seizing of empty packing plants would avail us nothing without the livestock." Seizure of the livestock on the farm had been suggested. However, this drastic remedy would "be wholly impracticable because the cattle are spread throughout all parts of the country." Importation of meat offered no solution because the supply was so small and "we would not think of asking for this meager supply for ourselves, because the people of other countries must have it to exist.

"There is only one remedy left—that is to lift controls on meat. . . ."

The President was threading a narrow and painful course between two potential disasters: Organized labor would demand more wages to meet the higher cost of living. Industry would ask price increases. As Truman said, "Meat is so important a part of our cost of living that removing price controls on it may have an effect on our economic structure generally . . ."

The minute meat controls came off, a tremendous flow of livestock started into the packing pens. Hogs jumped 8 and then 10 and 12 cents a pound. Cattle climbed to new and fantastically high prices. The Truman administration sustained a complete setback on its price policy. The President had, in fact, acted too late for the new policy to have any effect upon the election. Republicans made capital of the argument that he should have done the same thing weeks before, rather than starve the American dinner table until the eve of balloting.

Organized labor, reading its meat bills, began to tune up new wage demands.

When Harry Truman went home to Independence, Missouri, to vote on November 5, 1946, he did not make a campaign speech.

Sam Rayburn, the Democratic Speaker of the House, sought to whip up the feeble party spirits in Truman's home district. By midafternoon of November 6, Harry Truman knew the full extent of the political disaster. The Republican party had not only swept into control of the lower House of Congress, it had surprisingly taken over the Senate as well. Truman, his popularity register down from 87 per cent at the start of his administration to 32 per cent, faced a hostile Congress for the two years before the next election.

The President had struggled at the virtually hopeless task of carrying along the Roosevelt program and Roosevelt policies in a postwar era in which the majority of the people wanted nothing so much as to be rid of these very things. This public appetite was nursed, fed, and sharpened by the activities of the Republican party, a considerable number of Democratic Congressmen, and an imposing mélange of pressure groups. Truman had sincerely believed, his closest intimates said, that having been elected on Roosevelt's choice, he felt compelled to carry on the program of his predecessor. His failure was almost complete.

At this point, the President declared himself an independent man to his secretariat and advisers. He threw off all the old political shibboleths and determined to be Harry Truman, President. He issued a declaration of cooperation with the new Congress, but warned that inevitably differences, and honest ones, must arise. He would act sincerely for the best interests of the nation, taking it for granted that Congress, controlled by the Republicans, would do the same. Cooperation must be maintained. The nation approved this attitude on the part of the defeated President. It moved him up a few notches in its esteem.

The Democratic party was a study of dismay. Young Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas suggested that Harry Truman appoint a Republican as Secretary of State, then resign and let himself be succeeded as President under the law, thus giving the entire government over to GOP control. The thought was ridiculed, rejected, and forgotten.

As the Republican party moved into Washington in early De-

ember of 1946 to organize for the control of the Congress, its elation subsided. Sober thought prevailed. Sixteen years of minority representation had left the GOP hands stiff and unpracticed.

Harry Truman was down, but not out. Certainly he, too, had had enough.

## CHAPTER TEN

### TRUMAN STRIKES BACK

THE PRESIDENT put up a brave political front all through the fall of 1946 and the Democratic debacle. He sought to maintain and spread an air of confidence, but this was exploded by the election returns. The Republican party was moving into strategic control of the government. Truman stock hit rock bottom. The people generally were sour, distrustful, confused, and rebellious. It was no longer possible to keep up a brave and confident mien.

Harry Truman said he did not know how voters could approve the Taft-Reece-Crawford program, but he learned from bitter experience on November 6, as he rode back to Washington, that they certainly did not approve of his own. It was a glum Presidential party which returned to the nation's capital, weighted down with a sense of frustration and futility. It was hopeless to attempt to laugh this one off.

The President fought manfully, if ineffectually, for two years for the program of Franklin D. Roosevelt, a program which he had never fully digested himself, and undoubtedly never was fully to assimilate; a program, moreover, which he had sought to compromise with political realities. But the people would not pause to reckon the troubles which Roosevelt himself might have encountered, had he lived. Perhaps death had been kind to Franklin D. Roosevelt. The public in large measure voted not so much for the Republican party, when it swept it into control of both the House and the Senate, as against the Democrats. This indignation vote had built up through four years of wartime strains. Analysis of the election tabulations disclosed that despite Truman's vetoing of the Case anti-strike bill, he had not won labor's vote in the big metropolitan centers upon which Democratic party strength depended. Organized labor simply stayed away from the polls. Was

this because the President had lifted the meat price controls so dear to the union man, and so important to his family budget? No one could say.

But even the least could tell that Harry Truman and the Democratic party had sustained a stunning blow.

In Congress, the Republicans were holding their organization meetings. In the Senate, Taft, whom Truman had bitterly denounced, began rounding up an all-star team of conservatives. Taft, a conservative himself, was lining up the Senate. Arthur Vandenberg would be President pro tempore and would continue to speak on foreign policy. Finances would fall to the able Colorado Senator, Eugene Millikin. Kenneth Wherry of Nebraska, who had contributed to the rout on meat price controls, would be majority whip. There would be a policy committee headed by Taft, a labor committee headed by Taft, and a joint committee on economic conditions headed by Taft.

In the House, Joe Martin of Massachusetts was grooming himself to take over the Speakership from Sam Rayburn of Texas, and started drawing the lines for the tightest control of the majority that the Congress had seen in a decade. Martin had one unbeatable selling point: if the Republicans held together, they could capture the Presidency. Lush days would arrive again.

The Republican majority program, though not formulated, included a number of measures which Truman could not countenance. The majority was talking of a 20 per cent tax reduction, of tremendous whacking at the Federal budget, of trimming from one half million to a million employees from the government pay roll, and, most important, was planning "tough" labor legislation. They talked and planned such things, because the party had made these commitments in the campaign. In the House, Martin, conservative John Taber, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and all of the Speaker's advisers, were driving relentlessly to set up an unbeatable machine. In the Senate, Taft, a driving force of incomparable energy and capacity, was proceeding along like lines.

The most sensitive barometer in Washington is the news corps. Washington newsmen ceased to frequent the White House and

Presidential press conferences. They turned to the Congress with a thirst and zest that told plainly of the new fulcrum of government.

The President's offer of cooperation and collaboration with the Republican Congress had been accepted by the extreme liberal group as little short of downright surrender to conservatism. They saw Harry Truman, harassed and pressed by defeat and expediency, moving over into the conservative camp. The Republican party in Congress accepted this post-election statement as a purely political pronouncement, and waited suspiciously for concrete performance to demonstrate the sincerity which Truman sought to read into his solemn, somewhat abashed, pronouncement.

In the House, the Democratic party itself was sorely split. Rayburn of Texas had denounced any idea of his becoming Minority Leader. He did not want to step down to that place from the Speakership. Instead, he pledged, sincerely, his support to a New Deal Democrat, the former Majority Leader John McCormack of Massachusetts. But conservative Southern Democrats were in revolt over this proposal. They would accept Rayburn. They would never go along with McCormack. Finally, Truman himself persuaded Rayburn to accept the minority leadership, to keep the Democratic party from breaking open.

Even as these maneuvers proceeded, Truman was engrossed in a battle for the very life of his administration. On October 21, 1946, just before the national election, John L. Lewis, the heavy-browed dictator of the nation's 500,000 coal miners, chose to reopen his perennial fight with the government. Through the war years, Lewis had called coal strikes in defiance of President Roosevelt, and had always obtained a major share of the wage and working concessions which he demanded.

Lewis expected this arrangement to continue. Besides he had an old grudge to settle with Harry Truman. As chairman of the Senate National Defense Committee, Truman had compelled Lewis to come before that group and be questioned. Lewis at first had refused, and Truman had promptly issued a subpoena forcing his appearance. Lewis had not forgotten.



On May 21, 1946, Truman had seized the nation's coal mines, placed them under government operation, and forestalled a strike. At the same time, on May 29, Secretary of Interior Julius A. Krug and Lewis had negotiated an agreement, favorable to the miners, for operation of the pits while under government controls. When Lewis gave sudden notice on October 21 that he wished to reopen the negotiations and obtain higher wages, shorter hours, and other concessions, he contended that this was possible under a clause carried forward into the Krug-Lewis arrangement from an older understanding reached on April 11, 1945.

Lewis, asserting his authority under this clause, asked that negotiations begin November 1, four days before the election. This sudden, combined political and economic attack exasperated the Truman administration. The lights burned late in the White House as Harry Truman and his advisers debated what to do. In the early 1920's, Lewis had led the miners in a disastrous strike which was broken by court injunctions. Since then he had carefully built back his authority to where he came to stand as a force almost equal to government itself. He exercised his economic power virtually unchallenged throughout the three Roosevelt administrations.

Now he chose a strategic time for his assault. It was just before election, and the issue could not be settled in time to allay the deep misgivings of the country. Could Truman stand up to John L. Lewis? It was almost winter, and the nation needed coal and needed it badly. It could ill afford a long period of nonproduction while Lewis and the government were locked in dispute. The national stockpile of coal would at best last only about thirty days, and after that there would be cold homes, crippled transportation and utilities. Europe was moving toward the worst winter of a century. The United States was exporting millions of tons of coal to that starving and freezing continent to relieve the suffering and prevent riot and anarchy. Lewis's tactics held out the danger of staggering the national economy and strangling its vital production. He could abet the inflationary forces by choking off the supply of vitally needed goods. He could drive a knife into for-

eign policy by shutting off the supply of American coal which Italy, France, even Britain so desperately needed.

Lewis maintained that the agreement he had negotiated with Krug was void. The government indignantly rejected this argument, and the negotiations which started on November 1 came to naught. This was a necessarily embarrassing procedure for a harassed administration. When Lewis was advised to negotiate his contract with the mine owners, he haughtily dispelled the thought. He would deal with the government, operator of the mines. Secretary Krug, after months of dealing with Lewis, came to the unshakable conviction that nothing could be gained by further surrender. He gave the union very favorable terms in the arrangement of May 29. Further capitulation would only lead to new troubles. Harry Truman was of the same mind.

After fifteen days of fruitless wrangling, Lewis summarily ended the discussions, and served notice that the contract was terminated as of midnight, November 20. The election was past. The damage was done. But John L. Lewis was determined to make the Truman administration eat crow.

The administration, he well knew, was divided.

Secretary Krug, as unyielding as Lewis, won the mine boss's undying enmity. Harry Truman already had it. Both men were determined not to surrender. The issue was discussed in Cabinet meetings, and there was a division of counsel. The incalculable damage that might result from a prolonged strike led some of Truman's advisers to suggest the need for temporary concessions. Tall, blond Clark Clifford, an ex-navy officer and a St. Louis lawyer whom Truman had called into his administration, and on whom he placed increasing reliance, sided with Krug. Fight the issue out. Attorney General Tom Clark, a Texan with a strongly noticeable political ambition of his own, was given the job of bringing an injunction to stop the strike.

Clifford, Attorney General Clark, and a battery of lawyers believed they found the legal holds that would throw Lewis. The government moved quickly, sought an injunction in the court of Justice T. Alan Goldsborough, former Congressman from Mary-

land. Goldsborough on November 18 issued a temporary injunction to stay the strike until he could try the issues of whether the mine workers and their boss could strike against the government itself. Lewis ignored the order. Two days later, the coal mining industry virtually stopped. Lewis meant business. So did Truman. The President, ignoring all efforts to maneuver a compromise, left for a holiday in Florida. He kept in close touch with developments by telephone, and he stuck adamantly to the course which had been outlined. He refused, because the issue was before the courts, to comment directly or indirectly on the struggle.

When Lewis defied the injunction, the issue was drawn. Now the government felt that its case was virtually cinched. It is one thing to defy a President, but another thing to defy the majesty of the law itself. This was the very point raised later by Justice Felix Frankfurter when the issue reached the Supreme Court of the United States. Defying organized society differs greatly from defying an individual.

The government immediately moved that Lewis be cited for contempt of the court. Goldsborough issued an order for Lewis to show cause why such action should not be taken. Lewis and his lawyers replied by challenging the court's jurisdiction and contending that under other statutes Goldsborough lacked authority to have issued the temporary injunction in the original instance. Lewis, Goldsborough ordered, should be put to trial.

The small, stuffy courtroom hardly admitted the reporters, who flocked to watch the crucial battle. Long queues of the curious awaited the opportunity to hear the involved legal arguments, and get a glimpse of the shaggy-haired Lewis and bald, benign Justice Goldsborough. The Judge was proceeding carefully. There must be no misstep, and no prejudicial error that would bring a reversal to start the proceedings off anew. Lewis presented no witnesses, and rested his case entirely upon his lawyers' argument that Goldsborough was acting outside the scope of his authority. The Norris-LaGuardia Act, like the Clayton Act, prohibited issuance of such injunctions, both waiving the right of

Federal courts to step in and enjoin unions in controversies with employers, the attorneys contended.

It was December 3, cold and clammy in Washington, when Lewis walked into court and heard the verdict pronounced. Lewis, Goldsborough ruled, encouraged the miners by his November 15 notice of termination of contract, to strike and to interfere with the performance of governmental functions. He had ignored a temporary restraining order, and was thus in contempt of the court. It was true that the acts cited by Lewis's attorneys did forbid injunctions in labor disputes, but these acts did not extend to a suit by the government itself. Lewis would be fined \$10,000, his union, the staggering sum of \$3,500,000. The mine boss, shaken as he was by the verdict, roared his defiance to the court, denounced the injunction, and instantly sought an appeal. The government countered by itself carrying the case higher, and using every legal avenue to speed a final determination of the issue. Lewis ordered his men to return to work, and some thousands straggled back to the pits. Full-scale mining was not resumed until March when the Supreme Court made its decision.

Washington, long accustomed to Lewis victories, and the nation itself looked on with considerable surprise. The President had said nothing. He had refused to comment on the case. Vacationing in Florida, he kept a grave silence. Harry Truman was making a high mark with the country in an amazing comeback. No prize fighter hanging on the ropes had rebounded with a more spectacular rally, or fought a better fight. And despite the dry legal technicalities and the tedious debate over obscure phrases of old laws, the contest was intense and dramatic.

Betting was about even that the Supreme Court would reverse Justice Goldsborough and relieve Lewis and his union of the heavy fine the lower court had imposed. The Court on March 6 sustained Goldsborough's decision, and rejected Lewis's legal claims on every point. The penalty of \$10,000 on Lewis stood. The fine of \$3,500,000 against the union was reduced to \$700,000 with a proviso that if Lewis should not call off the strike within five

days, the entire amount would thereafter be levied on the union's treasury. The highest court's opinion was written by Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson, former Congressman who had known Judge Goldsborough in the House.

The Truman administration had learned to lean on Fred Vinson; Vinson's advice was always sound. After the sudden death of Chief Justice Harlan F. Stone, Truman picked Vinson as Stone's successor for several reasons. The wrangling feud in the Supreme Court between Associate Justices Jackson and Black precluded appointing one of the sitting members. Such a selection would only incite further factionalism. A strong hand and head were needed to settle the conference-room wrangling of the Court and speed up its procedure, which had lagged under Stone's scholarly, easygoing approach. Vinson, a Democrat and a liberal, fitted that formula. Confidence was needed, and Vinson had grown greatly in stature. Vinson said about Lewis, "One who defies the public authority and willfully refuses his obedience does so at his peril . . ."

"It was an attempt to repudiate and override the instrument of lawful government in the very situation in which governmental action was indispensable . . ."

The Truman administration had got off the canvas to score a technical knockout. The strike was canceled and the fines paid. It was the first time a President had taken John L. Lewis by the whiskers and manhandled him. That it was a mild-mannered folksy, sometimes blundering ex-farmer from Missouri cast in a role of which few thought him capable added indignity to the sting of Lewis's defeat. The Democratic party for the first time in eight months began to look up to its President.

Pity, which had weighed down the Truman administration through 1946, gave way to approval. Truman climbed back to 60 per cent in the popularity polls. The public wanted to see John L. Lewis licked and wanted to see him licked fairly. The Truman administration had proceeded wholly within the law, in a regular precise, and orderly manner. Public sympathy in the United States always gravitates toward the underdog. Harry Truman is

November, 1946, had been the underdog. The Lewis case provided the people with what they instinctively wanted: a man who had the nerve and stamina to stick through defeat, who would not give up, and who would keep fighting.

The Republican Eightieth Congress faced a new Harry Truman who was rapidly rebuilding his shattered popularity.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### EIGHTIETH CONGRESS

**T**HE VOTERS in the 1946 elections plucked the scepter out of Harry Truman's hands and placed it squarely in those of the Republican Congress. The ideal political situation for the Republicans, however, would have been to capture only one branch of the Congress, preferably the House. Then the party could have proposed its program and passed it through one chamber to an early demise in the other, thus loading upon Truman, as titular head of the Democratic party, full blame for legislative failures.

Truman became the twentieth President who had to deal with a Congress dominated by the opposite political group. But his position was made easier by the fact that the opposition won more than it bargained for in the election. But the Republican margin in the Senate was narrow. Crucial struggles on controversial issues loomed.

For his own part, President Truman had grown in his office. He had quietly lived down the "Bourbon" tradition formerly associated with him. Presidential parties were now more discreetly convivial and decorous, in the White House manner. Truman also reached out from Missouri to make appointments from other states, and the "Missouri Gang" opprobrium, attached to his early nominations, began to fade. The President grew more confident and broke himself of "shooting from the hip" in his press conferences. Wits once said that President Truman got up at five-thirty every morning so he would have time to "put both feet in his mouth." He had largely lived this down, too.

In no small measure, the change was affected by Clark Clifford, the St. Louis attorney who became Truman's special counsel after serving briefly as the White House naval aide. Gradually, as his capacities for administration, for judging public reaction, and for

sensing politically dangerous situations became manifest, Clifford assumed an increasingly important role in policy determination. He impressed upon Truman the sagacity of silence, the need for holding officials to their responsibilities and for keeping administrative work proceeding in an orderly flow. He began to draft the President's important speeches with noticeable improvement in the basic thoughts and literary qualities. Clifford showed results, was hard-working and direct in his efforts.

At the same time, President Truman faced the first session of the Eightieth Congress with misgivings. He had regarded the Seventy-ninth Democratic Congress as unfriendly to a degree second only to the Congress with which Andrew Jackson had been lashed. The Seventy-ninth enacted only a minor scale of the all-embracing programs which Truman submitted, and ignored the balance. Truman and his administration came to count upon hardly more than a hundred loyal followers in the House and Senate. Truman made no secret among his intimates that he would welcome a thorough reconversion of some elements in his party. There existed a reactionary Democratic party and a liberal Democratic party, with the Republicans split into corresponding camps. The reactionary elements were sufficiently strong to combine and to throttle progressive legislation. Truman believed that regardless of party labels it was these factions which cooperated to scuttle his programs. A kinder fate could hardly be expected from a Republican Congress.

The President adopted a conciliatory, disarming tone in January 1947.

"I realize that on some matters the Congress and the President may have honest differences of opinion," he said. "Partisan differences, however, did not cause material disagreements as to the conduct of the war. Nor, in the conduct of our international relations, during and since the war, have such partisan differences been material.

"On some domestic issues we may, and probably shall, disagree. That in itself is not to be feared. It is inherent in our form of government. But there are ways of disagreeing; men who differ



can still work together sincerely for the common good. We shall be risking the nation's safety and destroying our opportunities for progress if we do not settle any disagreements in this spirit, without the thought of partisan advantage. . . ."

Truman did not submit a catalogue of progressive ideals for his legislative program such as had bogged Congress in his first two years. His program for the Eightieth was general, short, and squared better with legislative and political reality. It was no longer Harry Truman struggling with the inheritance of another man's social philosophy, but a President speaking in his own right.

Truman proposed a mild program of labor legislation to curb jurisdictional strikes and boycotts, to require arbitration of disputes in cases of disagreements over the interpretation of union contracts, and some improvement of the social-security benefits for workers. The latter was the point he had argued for in vetoing the Case antistrike bill. A joint commission of Congressmen, labor, management, and the public was suggested to study and propose further strike remedies.

He proposed further that action be taken against monopolistic business practices. He urged an expanded housing program, and development of a farm program of an unspecified nature but intended to ensure firm and adequate prices. His requests were renewed for a public health and medical insurance program, which conservative members of Congress and the American Medical Association a year before had denounced as "socialistic" because of its compulsory nature. He asked that the United States open its borders to the displaced persons of Europe, of whom scarcely twenty thousand had been admitted in a year. There were a million in the United States and British zones of occupation. Congressional support was asked in maintaining a strong military establishment. Debt reduction and economy in government were stressed. These considerations he spelled out in detail later, in his budget message.

Before the Eightieth started its deliberations, several weeks were spent setting up the machinery provided in the Legislative

Reorganization bill, which the Seventy-ninth had passed with Truman support and prodding. Conflicts broke out at once. Liberal Republicans in the Senate resented the manner in which Senator Taft assumed, as chairman of the policy committee, direction of committee assignments and passed out appointments to the conservative leaders of the party. Senator Morse wanted to be on the Foreign Relations Committee, and was denied. Senator George D. Aiken of Vermont wanted the Labor Committee; Taft took the chairmanship for himself. Senator Charles W. Tobey of Vermont was blocked out of leadership of the Armed Services Committee, but was awarded the Banking and Currency chairmanship instead. The liberal elements of the party complained that the Republican organization of Congress left the conservative leaders firmly entrenched in all strategic committee chairmanships.

An ebullient Republican prediction that the Congress would daily "open with a prayer and close with a probe" was quickly forgotten. The country had not voted for a post-mortem or for grand-jury proceedings. The country demanded instead that the new majority take constructive action to solve the problems for which it had rejected Harry Truman's proposed solutions.

The Republicans led off with a constitutional amendment limiting White House tenure to two terms. The Democrats, falling easily into their minority role, quipped that the majority was passing a bill "to prevent Roosevelt from having another term." Nevertheless the amendment was submitted by the requisite majority and was quickly ratified by more than a dozen states, despite the debatability of its wisdom. Implied was a certain cynical unwillingness to allow the people a free and uninhibited choice of their Chief Executive.

Despite political jockeying there were tangible accomplishments in the first session of the Eightieth Congress. Although the record finally written pleased neither the progressive liberals nor retrograde conservatives of either party, the Republicans proceeded at their job without any spirit of vengeance. And for sixteen years they had been dominated by the Democrats. The lust

On October 23, 1945, he went personally to the Congress to add emphasis to his conviction to urge the immediate need for such a program. However, the Seventy-ninth Congress evaded this issue. Organized opposition of churches and schools, in particular, precluded affirmative action.

Thereupon the President, in order to educate and inform public opinion and enlist its support, summoned a distinguished group of clergymen, scientists, and public officials to make a study of the entire problem. This group of nine members represented as fine a body of citizens as could be assembled. Some of its members accepted the assignment with preconceived opposition to the program. Nevertheless, after six months of painstaking study, the group unanimously recommended that Congress enact the program at once.

The commission's voluminous report advanced irrefutable arguments. Many of the conclusions will be recalled generations hence..

"It is apparent from the lessons of history and from the experience of the postwar period that the only way in which we can lend authority to our voice in international affairs and inspire confidence in the ability of the United Nations to enforce peace is to maintain our armed forces at a level of efficiency and comprehensiveness that will defy challenge by any would be aggressor," the commission decided. "If the people of this country will declare in convincing fashion their determination to support such a program in all its elements for as long as may be necessary to guarantee the attainment of a stable world order through the United Nations, they will make the greatest contribution to perpetual peace within their power. We wish we could conscientiously arrive at a different conclusion. . . .

"The United States, shunning aggression, stands as the prime target for the aggressor of the future. This is true both because its great wealth makes it a tempting target for conquest and because it looms as the chief obstacle to world domination by any power seeking to obliterate freedom. Experience in two world wars made it presently evident to all that the United States must

be defeated—and defeated first—if aggression is to succeed. . . . Loss of our possessions, our liberties, our lives, and the destruction of mankind's hope for an enduring peace may be the price of our failure to take precautions now. . . ."

The commission's reasoned study was presented to the Eightieth Congress midway in its session, in May, 1947, causing the House Armed Services Committee to hold hearings. But in the Senate, Senator Taft denounced the program as militaristic and announced that the bill would not be considered. Action on universal military training was thereby again postponed, although the House committee reported a measure at the last of the session.

The Congress not only ignored President Truman's request for a strengthened regulation of economic monopoly. It slashed deeply at the appropriations for enforcement of the inadequate Sherman and Clayton Antitrust Acts.

Truman requested an expanded housing program. Congress replied by passing a rent control extension with a 15 per cent rent-increase rider. The formula was ingenious; a tenant must agree to the rental increase. If he refused, the landlord could claim the premises himself, and subsequently relet the home or apartment to another party at the increased rate. Idaho's Senator Glen Taylor, a Democrat, indignantly denounced the bill as a Republican "rent decontrol and dehousing act." The President was presented with the alternative of vetoing the bill and accepting the responsibility of eliminating all rent controls, or accepting it with the 15 per cent rider. He did the latter and denounced the bill as unfair and inadequate in its controls. At the same time, he suggested acidly that Congress might well investigate the real-estate lobby which had worked its wonders with the legislators.

"It is clear that, insofar as the Congress is concerned, it is this bill or no rent control at all," the President replied to the lawmakers, in giving a grudging acceptance to the formula for a 15 per cent increase. "I have chosen the lesser of two evils. . . . It is clear that this legislation marks a step backward in our efforts to protect tenants against unjustified rent increases arising out of war conditions. . . . The cost of living is already too high without

this additional burden. . . . We must get prices down, not devise means of getting the price of shelter up. . . . Since federal rent control is being irreparably weakened, I appeal to the governors of the states . . . to exert every effort to protect tenants from hardship, eviction or exploitation. They can soften, although not avoid completely, the blow to rent control . . ."

Furthermore, said the President, Congress ought not to adjourn without passing legislation to encourage, support, and assist the construction of new homes. Congress ignored his request.

The developments throughout the Eightieth Congress were highly political, therefore hotly controversial. Each party maneuvered with one thought predominant: to move into strategic position for the 1948 presidential election.

The areas of agreement between Harry Truman and the Eightieth Congress were narrow. Disagreements were broad. The President adhered to a liberal course which met his concepts of liberalism and which, as Congress proceeded, became increasingly impressive to those who had bewailed the death of progressive policy in the Democratic party. If he had not been a militantly advanced liberal, Harry Truman most certainly had not been a staunch conservative either.

The real conflict between the President and the first session of the Eightieth fell in terms of three great issues: first, tax reductions in a time of abounding prosperity; second, curbing of organized labor; and third, restrictions upon reciprocal trade. These issues, by affirmative struggle on each side, brought separate showdowns that established the premises for future political campaigns. Let us examine these crucial questions further.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE TAX VETOES

**W**HATEVER FAULTS he had demonstrated during two trying years in the White House, on June 16, 1947, Harry Truman proved himself a President of courage. On that day, he vetoed the Republican bill intended to reduce the people's taxes.

Truman became the first Chief Executive in history openly to oppose a tax-relief measure. He killed the bill in spite of anguished warnings by members of his own party that he might thereby sink the Democrats without a trace in the 1948 election.

The voter's pocketbook is the most sensitive of all of his nerve centers. He wants the government to take less and leave him more. He is less interested in providing, at his expense, for the welfare of peoples in Europe and around the world, whom he has never seen and for whom he cares but abstractedly, than in looking after his own well-being. Generally, the American taxpayer would rather have a dollar in his pocket than a half bushel of wheat at an Italian relief station. He would rather spend his own money than have the government spend it for him. And if it comes to a matter of waste, he entertains not the slightest doubt as to who should do that job. It ought to be himself.

Immediately after the surrender of Japan, the Truman administration moved with dispatch to cancel billions of dollars of war appropriations. The record of projected savings was impressive. In ten months after V-J Day, the Democratic-controlled Seventy-ninth Congress canceled \$55,000,000,000 of direct appropriations and another \$9,000,000,000 of contracts. This did not represent actual cash; rather it meant that this amount was not to be spent, and the public debt was consequently to be kept down by that figure.

At the same time, the Congress proceeded to grant substantial

tax relief to corporations through repeal of the excess-profits tax and a small measure of individual tax relief. The cash credits which corporations had established in the Treasury for postwar withdrawal and expenditure for reconversion programs were made immediately available. Altogether, the tax benefits amounted to some six billions of dollars.

Both of these programs had administration support. The tax relief provided business with cash to reestablish itself in peacetime production, and the repeal of the excess-profits tax meant the profits might regain their normal status. The drastic reduction of government spending amounted to saying that deficit spending would be brought to an end, that this inflationary pressure would be terminated, and that the government's fiscal house would be put in order. This situation would be highly encouraging to business. The contract-termination law gave government agencies authority to settle payments on contracts only partially performed, in order that business would not be required to shoulder losses incident to the termination of the war.

President Truman and the Congress got on well with budgetary problems in the first year. In the 1946 election campaign, however, the Republican party promised a further tax-reduction program. The Republicans lamented that Truman had not sufficiently cut government expenditures. They promised substantial cuts. The Legislative Reorganization Act provided that Congress, after reviewing the President's budget, established its own budget ceiling and stay within it. In this connection, Republicans promised that the Congressional ceiling would be substantially lower than the President's figures. The \$65,000,000,000 of remissions and \$6,000,000,000 of tax reductions were forgotten as the administration and the opposition moved into political struggle over the tax and appropriations programs.

Naturally, the United States, having fought a long and costly war, could not revert to its former peacetime schedule of taxes and expenditures. New responsibilities and additional budget charges were bound to be placed upon the Federal Treasury in the years of

peace following a war. Heavier international responsibilities had to be assumed; an increased public debt involved larger interest charges which had to be met promptly. Millions of new veterans made their claims upon the Treasury. Armaments and armies, particularly in periods of continuing international stress and concern, could not be allowed to deteriorate. Domestic and international problems involving money grants pressed for solution, and could not be adjourned.

The administration had to worry over these affairs and sought to meet responsibilities at the lowest common dollar. Congress had to trim and prune wherever evidence indicated that a tendency to extravagance and poor judgment had crept into the President's calculations.

The budget which Harry Truman presented Congress for the fiscal year of 1948, from July 1, 1947, to July 1, 1948, totaled \$37,500,000,000, the largest peacetime budget in history. Of this, \$5,000,000,000 was for interest on the public debt, \$2,100,000,000 for tax refunds, \$11,200,000,000 for the Army and Navy, \$3,500,000,000 for loans and international relief programs, \$7,300,000,000 for veterans, for a total of \$29,100,000,000. There was \$443,000,000 provided for the development of atomic energy, production of fissionable material, and prosecution of experimental research; and the balance of the budget covered general governmental expenses, aids to agriculture, public health, highways, transportation and communication, social security, and Federal housing projects.

This budget was regarded by the Eightieth Congress, and pictured to the country, as another wasteful splurge. The chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, John Taber of New York, talked of reductions of six or eight billions of dollars. The Senate chairman, Styles Bridges of New Hampshire, thought it ought to be six billions. Senator Taft looked upon four or five billions as more realistic. The joint Congressional committee on the budget, an unwieldy group of 102 men serving on the taxing and appropriating committees, met and wrangled hotly, and finally gave up its job to a subcommittee of Republicans. Since Demo-



cratic members were not called in, the Senate Democratic leader Alben Barkley promptly tagged this group as the "subterranean subcommittee."

While the majority Republicans talked in terms of six billions of dollars, the Democrats said two billions was more like it, and argued that it would be folly to propose drastic reductions until the Congress should know what commitments the disturbing state of international relationships might involve. They insisted that Congress pledge itself that any budget savings be applied to reduction of the current \$250,000,000,000 public debt.

When the House passed the resolution for a six-billion-dollar reduction, the Senate responded by fixing the figure at four and one-half billions. It also proposed that \$2,600,000,000 of any savings effected be applied to reduction of the national debt. This the House refused to accept. First, the savings were not sufficient, and second the application of \$2,600,000,000 to the national debt would leave too little room for tax reductions within the framework of the balanced budget the Republican party hoped to claim.

The bill, despite the intent of the Legislative Reorganization Act, thereupon became hopelessly snagged in conference.

The Republican majority in the House, meanwhile, pushed ahead with its own plans for a tax-reduction program. The chairman, Harold Knutson, talked so insistently of a 20 per cent "across the board" reduction that finally Speaker Joseph Martin of Massachusetts felt impelled to disclaim this proposal as the official Republican program. The House Ways and Means Committee majority rode roughshod over the Democrats, and started tax hearings. They called two and only two witnesses in favor of the tax program. Both were former Assistant Secretaries of the Treasury, John W. Hanes and Roswell Magill. The two witnesses admitted that, given the choice of tax reduction or a payment on the national debt, they would choose the latter. However, both maintained that a tax reduction and debt retirement were both feasible, that tax reductions would promote business development and provide incentive to investment, besides operating to curb any possible recession which might immediately or thereafter manifest itself.

To wait until the recession should begin would be too late to admit of remedial government action, they argued.

Secretary of the Treasury John Snyder, speaking for the administration, must have known that he was arguing to a hostile jury when he disputed the advisability of immediate tax reductions. Harshly questioned by the Republican majority, he insisted that business was operating at nearly top capacity and could not do much more. Therefore, additional incentive in the form of tax reduction was not required. He testified that even if the incentive were provided, it would not prove advantageous because business could not find the labor, materials, and machinery required for further expansion. What was needed was not a reduction of individual income taxes, but a careful study of a thorough and comprehensive revision of the entire tax structure. There was a great deal of juggling of figures on both sides. Subsequent events proved that actual receipts exceeded by five billion the administration estimate of \$38,800,000,000.

The whole argument revolved around the stand taken by the administration, as expressed by Snyder: "Under present economic conditions, it is sound policy to achieve a substantial budget surplus, and to apply that surplus to reduction of the public debt. . . . When national income is high, as it now is, the public debt should be reduced. We now have an opportunity to demonstrate our determination to pay off the debt. I believe that we should begin a program of debt retirement with the largest feasible reduction. . . ."

That might be well and good, the Republicans argued. But Truman had no monopoly on the desire to pay off the debt. The question was, could not the debt be retired in a sizable amount and taxes still be reduced? That question the majority resolved in the affirmative, the administration in the negative.

Knutson introduced a bill for a straight across-the-board reduction of 20 per cent and statistically the measure was unimpeachable. It gave the same percentage of reduction to all classes of income earners. On a percentage basis all were treated alike. In terms of dollars, it was quite another matter: the married man with two

dependents having a net income of \$5,000 would have been afforded a tax savings of \$118, whereas the individual with a \$350,000 income and the same number of dependents would have realized a savings of \$51,650. While the bill was statistically correct it proposed to afford the smallest savings, dollar-wise, to the 90 per cent of small incomes falling in the brackets of \$5,000 and less. This was too much even for the Republican leadership of the House, who smelled a tax mutiny brewing. One courageous member, Albert J. Engel of Michigan, resisting all political pressure denounced the bill as a travesty and sought to organize a tax rebellion within the party.

The bill was rewritten to meet the gathering storm of objections. Smallest incomes of \$1,000 or less were to be afforded the 30 per cent reduction; 20 per cent was to go to incomes of \$1,400 to \$302,000; and only 10.5 per cent to incomes above \$302,500. This was to cost the Treasury \$3,800,000,000 per year, and the legislation would be retroactive to January 1, 1947. Instantly, Senate Taft, to the discomfiture of Republicans in the House, demonstrated indisputably that the loss of tax revenue in the last half of the fiscal year, plus the necessity for refunds on the first half would mean total revenue losses of around five billion.

When the bill reached the Senate it was again rewritten, and its effective date set at July 1, 1947. Thereupon the bill went to the White House.

The Democratic party had taken its cue from President Truman's "State of the Union" message in which he strongly hinted he would veto tax reductions.

"In a prosperous period such as the present one, the budget of the Federal government should be balanced," the President had argued. "Prudent management of public finance requires that we begin the process of reducing the debt. . . . Expenditures relating to the war are still high. Considerable sums are required to alleviate world famine and suffering. Aid to veterans will continue at a peak level. The world situation is such that large military expenditures are required. Interest on the public debt and certain other costs are irreducible. For these reasons I have had to practice

stringent economy in preparing the budget; and I hope that the Congress will co-operate in this program of economy."

Here was a plain warning against tax reductions in 1947. But the Republican party had its campaign commitments—vague as they might be, and amended as they had been in the progress of the tax bill through Congress—to be discharged. The Democratic party, as Truman's message had premised, attacked the bill at every stage, and the ramrod manner in which the majority party sought to whip it through the Congress was little calculated to still the Democratic clamor that the rich were being afforded a whopping tax saving.

However, many Democrats secretly hoped that Harry Truman would let the tax bill become a law without his signature. They did not want the President to approve it, but neither did they wish to risk the political dynamite of a veto.

It was undeniable that business was operating at record levels. Yet no one could say for a certainty whether business would or would not need the incentive of tax reduction to keep operating at such a pace. No one could accurately prophesy the arrival of a depression which the bill was intended partially to counteract before it got started.

It was undeniable that the proposed 30 per cent reduction gave the married man with two children, earning two thousand a year, a \$28.50 tax reduction, and the same man, if he should earn one hundred thousand, a reduction of \$18,000. It was undeniable that while the first man was afforded three times the percentage of tax relief accorded the latter, he actually saved only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of his total income, while the tax savings of the latter would amount to more than 11 per cent of his total income. The facts of arithmetic lent substance to the Democratic argument that the real relief in dollars and cents per individual was being granted to those in the higher-income tax brackets, while the 90 per cent of taxpayers were in the small-earnings class.

A tax argument is never settled, and there are almost as many separate theories of taxation as there are entrenched interests. Congress juggles tax law every two years, to meet some pressure or

some real or fancied problem. Because there is no real agreement on taxation, and at best only plausible compromise, it is customary for the House to pass its tax bills, as was done with this measure, under a gag rule which prohibits members from submitting amendments and forces them to vote the entire bill up or down without change.

While the Republicans were jamming through their tax bill, the joint conferees met again to try to fix a budget ceiling. After all, the decision was months overdue, and it would look strange to be cutting taxes without knowing, in advance, the amounts to be covered by appropriations. Appropriations somehow had to square with income. House members insisted that the Senate agree to the tax bill, reducing revenues some \$3,800,000,000, and they in turn would agree to \$4,500,000,000 of budget reductions. This the Senate indignantly refused, and all efforts to arrive at a scientific budget, which had been the purpose of the Legislative Reorganization Act, were lost in party squabbling.

Meanwhile, Harry Truman left no doubt of his Missouri stubbornness. He sent back a sizzling veto.

"The right kind of tax reduction, at the right time, is an objective to which I am deeply committed," the President said. "But I have reached the conclusion that this bill represents the wrong kind of tax reduction, at the wrong time. It offers dubious, ill-apportioned, and risky benefits at the expense of a sound tax policy, and is, from the standpoint of government finances, unsafe. . . ."

"Ample evidence points to the continuation of inflationary pressures. Tax reduction now would increase them. . . ."

"Reductions in income tax rates are not required now to permit necessary investment and business expansion. There is no shortage of funds for this purpose in any wide sector of our economy. As a matter of fact, the amount of liquid funds in the hands of corporations and individuals at the present time is nearly \$200 billion. . . ."

The President went on to tell Congress that tax reduction by such a method was not needed to increase purchasing power; the

way to accomplish that was by "wise policies and improved practices of business and labor, not by hastily invoking the fiscal powers of Government on a broad scale . . . Tax reduction now would add to, rather than correct, maladjustments in the economic structure. . . ." International commitments of undetermined magnitude would have to be met, and this was another argument against siphoning off government income through tax reduction. Moreover, it was time to pay off some of the staggering national debt.

"If the government does not reduce the public debt during the most active and inflationary periods, there is little prospect of material reduction at any time, and the country would, as a result, be in a poorer position to extend supports to the economy should a subsequent deflationary period develop. . . ."

The message bristled with defiance. Republican leaders had secretly hoped that Truman would veto the bill, for they expected to be able to override his veto. Instantly, they attempted to do this. It was a tense, overstrained House that proceeded to vote. The outcome was in doubt until the last name was called. Then, the Republicans found that they had failed by the margin of two votes, by exactly the number of their own party who bolted to support the President, to obtain the two-thirds required majority. Instantly, the majority demanded a recount, and the decision stood.

"The President's suggestion that we wait for tax reduction until next year is nothing but cold-blooded politics," shouted Republican Tax Chairman Harold Knutson.

"President Truman's veto of the tax relief bill is a flagrant abuse of the veto power," the Republican leader, Charles Halleck of Indiana, accused.

"Instead of cooperating with the Congress, as he promised immediately after the election he would do, he [President Truman] has chosen instead to continue the old New Deal policy of tax and tax and spend and spend," said Republican Speaker Joseph W. Martin.

Democrats were not happy about the situation, either. Thirty-

five of them had bolted the President on the issue, and the 13 who helped sustain the President had voted for the most part with squeamish trepidation. They felt better, later, when public opinion polls disclosed that a majority of voters preferred debt reduction to tax reduction, if given a choice between the two.

After Truman's veto was sustained, Republican Senators wanted to let the issue drop, and file it under unfinished business to be settled at the 1948 election. Not so with Republican House leaders. They were not satisfied. They enlisted the aid of a conservative Senate Democrat, Harry Byrd of Virginia, and began a careful poll of members. Enough House members had weakened and were ready to override, but the Senate was uncertain. Finally, convinced that they could come within one or two votes of overriding another veto, the House leadership informed the Senate it was sending back another tax-reduction bill and wanted action on it. The Senate had no alternative but to accept.

The House, and then the Senate, passed a second bill providing the same scale of reductions, effective this time, however, on January 1, 1948. Could a veto be overridden, the party then could claim in the 1948 campaigns that it had forced a tax-relief program down the throat of an unwilling and obstructionist President.

On July 18, the President was ready with another veto. He returned the bill promptly, and said, "This is still the wrong kind of tax reduction and this is still the wrong time to provide for tax reduction. . . . Since H. R. 1 was disapproved, there has been no lessening of the need to make substantial payments of the public debt . . . The bill would remove 21 per cent of this wartime tax burden for a married couple with an income of \$2,500 [*i. e.*, 21 per cent of the income-tax liability]. The bill would remove 64 per cent of this wartime tax burden for a couple with an income of \$100,000. The bill would remove 85 per cent of this wartime tax burden for a couple with an income of \$1,000,000. . . . Because H. R. 3950 is at complete variance with the fundamental requirements of a good tax bill, I am compelled to return it. . . ."

The majority party was enraged, and this time the House speaker

y overrode the veto. But in the Senate, by the narrowest of margins, the second veto was sustained.

Tax reduction was dead at least until 1948. Republicans were morally certain that, in that year, Harry Truman himself would propose his own scheme of tax reduction by raising the exemptions, removing more millions from the lower-bracket tax rolls (some twelve million had been relieved of tax liabilities by minor changes in 1945), and himself reap a political harvest.

Truman's tax vetoes sharpened the majority party's determination to do a real trimming job on the appropriations bills. The House Appropriations Committee, led by Taber, cut so deeply into the bills that Senate Republicans became alarmed. Men like Wayne Morse of Oregon and George Aiken of Vermont deplored the whacking reductions made in land reclamation, Rural Electrification, and agricultural benefits, causing the Senate members hastily to rectify what they regarded as grave political errors. There was danger that the predominantly Republican agricultural areas might be driven back to the Democratic party by such blunderbuss economy.

When the session ended, the Republican party had actually not succeeded in fixing any ceiling on the Federal budget. Taber's talk of ousting a million "bureaucrats" from Federal pay rolls had faded off to less than 200,000. The majority party claimed savings of \$4,120,000,000 in Harry Truman's budget. However, the Democrats insisted that \$1,200,000,000 of this figure was "phony," representing deferred obligations which would have to be met later, and admitted reductions of only \$1,500,000,000.

Of course, Harry Truman was not accepting the Republican party claims at face value either. Admittedly, his budget had been trimmed, but in referring to the "so-called" reductions he left no doubt that he regarded the claims as greatly exaggerated. Accordingly, he directed the Bureau of the Budget to make a detailed study and settle the argument with statistical studies.

The President had come a long way since the election night of November 6, 1946. He had resisted his own party's pressure



to exercise his deepest convictions on the tax bills. After all, he had himself been a debtor for twenty years, having paid off a heavy sum in trifling amounts squeezed from a small salary. He knew the importance of paying a debt when one has the money.

The Republicans endangered their position with agriculture, with labor, with western ranchers, irrigation farmers, and with educators, by slashing into Federal appropriations which would benefit these people who also vote. Moreover, the Republicans cut twenty million from appropriations for enforcement of tax laws, the annual fund for the Bureau of Internal Revenue. Every dollar spent for tax enforcement yields approximately twenty dollars of revenue. This meant that the Federal Treasury might readily sustain a loss of four hundred millions, a fact the President hastened to make clear.

If the Republicans were playing politics with taxes and the budget, Harry Truman had developed a willingness to meet them at the game. He acted like a man who did not mind risking grave political consequences, who would "rather be right than be President."

It was a dangerous fight for Harry Truman. The opposition itself was being fanned and watered between rounds. The unabashed vigor with which Harry Truman wielded the veto to kill two tax-reduction bills set the Republican Congress in a ferment. House Leader Halleck remarked that Truman had greatly enjoyed twisting Congress's tail. Now the Congress would, in its final weeks, do a little tail twisting of its own.

Had not Truman said the time was for debt reduction, and not tax reduction? The Republicans remembered the two billion in terminal-leave bonds issued to veterans of World War II. These provided a ready instrument for embarrassment. Congress passed legislation authorizing immediate cashing of these bonds. Harry Truman wanted the debt reduced. Here was one way to do it. Let him veto that one.

The President recognized the stratagem. He signed the bill, but issued a strong plea that veterans withhold cashing the bonds. Some took his advice, but more rushed to get their money. This

sudden new stream of currency poured into the nation's economic veins added to the inflationary pressure. The tail twisting was concluded for the present.

The politics of taxation was sharpened in the election year when the Republican Congress—twice beaten by vetoes—renewed the campaign for reductions. Recognizing the pressure for tax relief, Truman sought to seize the initiative by proposing his own alternative program of a special \$40 credit on everyone's tax bill, and a recoupment of this loss through reinstatement of an excess-profits tax levy on corporation incomes.

Truman's tax program provoked only jeers and snorts among the Republicans, and infuriated some Democrats. Eighty-six-year-old Robert L. Doughton of North Carolina, former Democratic chairman of the tax committee, frankly told the President he would not introduce his bill.

"My God!" exploded the Republican chairman, Harold Knutson, "I didn't know inflation had gone that far. I remember when Tom Pendergast paid only \$2 a vote, and Truman now proposes to pay \$40." Republican Floor Leader Charles Halleck wanted to know why Truman had failed to promise a mule with the \$40.

If Truman was after votes with his program, the Republicans were writing their bill with one eye on the election calendar, too. They threw the Truman bill out to pass their own, a whopping \$7,100,000,000 tax reduction which Truman and his advisers contended would produce a Treasury deficit in 1949. The Senate proceeded to scale down the bill to safer proportions.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### THE TAFT-HARTLEY BILL

**T**HE REPUBLICANS interpreted the 1946 election returns as a mandate to remedy the inadequacies of the National Labor Relations Act, passed in 1935.

Just as the exploitation of labor by ruthless and unenlightened industrial managers had led to enactment of this law, so the excessive dictatorial power and the apparent irresponsibility with which certain labor leaders exercised this power had culminated in a popular demand for corrective measures.

The Wagner Labor Relations Act resulted from management abuses. It was written to ensure to labor free collective bargaining, to guarantee labor the right to strike in obtaining its demands, and to ensure the individual employee's privilege of joining a union without fear of reprisal by his employer.

Within a few years, it became apparent that the pendulum was swinging the other way. By 1938, demands were growing to weight the act more evenly, to provide a better balance of power between labor and industry. It was felt in Congress that the National Labor Relations Board, as created by the Wagner Act and supported by the courts, had given the statute a strongly prolabor interpretation. Thereupon, the House of Representatives conducted an exhaustive investigation of the board's performance under the act. This inquiry led to a complete reconstitution of the board with a new membership.

Labor abuses and disturbances, however, persisted. Strikes continued. The public was agitated, the Congress enraged. Three times the House passed bills amending the Labor Act. It sought to write into the law a withdrawal of labor's rights in wildcat strikes and secondary boycotts, to enforce registration of labor unions, and to compel the disclosure of their financial affairs. But

each time organized labor proved strong enough to kill the House measures in the Senate.

When war came in 1941, labor proceeded to turn out an amazing record of production. At the same time, labor seized the opportunity to press for new demands. In exasperation at the perennial stoppages of coal production in wartime, Congress responded to labor's challenge by passing, over Roosevelt's veto, the Smith-Connally Act authorizing the government to seize and operate national defense plants which were tied up by strikes. This remedy also proved ineffective. Labor continued to obtain better terms from the government, and actually welcomed the seizures.

Labor unions struck and enforced their demands almost without failure. They enjoyed a highly favorable governmental policy and had strengthened their membership through the war years. They fought their own civil wars to the grave disadvantage of the national welfare. They refused to admit labor abuses and had steadfastly opposed the slightest modification of their privileges.

By 1947 the people and their newly elected Republican Congressmen were determined to write into the law restraints upon unions as well as management. The bosses of labor, said Congressmen, had asked for it. For twelve years, they had ordered and managed strikes not only against the wishes and best interests of the public but against those of the members of their own unions. This was no time for half measures. The Republicans were determined to write new and comprehensive legislation.

So far as President Truman was concerned, the mild labor program he proposed in his State of the Union Message in January, 1947 fell upon deaf ears.

"We must not . . . adopt punitive legislation," Truman said. "We must not, in order to punish a few labor leaders, pass vindictive laws which will restrict the proper rights of the rank and file of labor. We must not, under the stress of emotion, endanger our American freedoms by taking ill-considered action which will lead to results not anticipated or desired."

Truman might as well have shouted his advice into the wind. In fact, many wondered how a President, whose administration

had been harried almost to ruin by labor strife, could adopt such a temperate tone. It certainly did not sound like the same man who only some months earlier had counseled such draconic measures at the time of the railroad transportation crisis.

Actually, it had been impressed upon the President by his political advisers that the Democratic party needed the support of organized labor to win elections. The 1946 debacle proved that. Then, too, Truman had taken a long second look. The 113,000,000 man-days of production lost by strikes in 1946, a mountainous gap in the national economy, was not all chargeable to the intransigence of labor. Truman emphasized this when he said that "management shares with labor the responsibility for failure to reach agreements which would have averted strikes."

The late spring of 1947 witnessed acrimonious debate, political maneuver, and the application of unrelenting pressure in the halls of Congress. Imposing lobbies arrayed by both management organizations and labor unions descended on Capitol Hill to foment unremitting conflict.

Probably no more bitter fight had been seen in Congress since the lend-lease program was fought by organized isolationism. Harry Truman vetoed the Case bill in June, 1946. This time he was going to get a much more stringent law.

The House Labor Committee was heavily weighted with a will to destroy unionism through regulation. Its chairman was a mild-mannered Congressman from New Jersey, Fred A. Hartley. As a committeeman he had attended only a few sessions while the Democrats held control. But as Republican Majority Chairman, he intended to do something about labor. Since he planned to retire at the end of his term, this intention did not place him within reach of political retribution. So far as House action was concerned, Hartley succeeded. It was months before the House committee brought out a bill, but what they had lacked in speed, they made up in the thoroughness with which they proposed to regulate the most minute intra-union and labor-management relations.

In the Senate, the Labor Committee, reorganized by Senator Taft, was badly split. Senator Joseph H. Ball of Minnesota advo

cated strict regulation. But he was vigorously opposed by Democratic Senators James Murray of Montana, Claude Pepper of Florida, Elbert Thomas of Utah, and Republicans Wayne Morse and George Aiken. Senator Taft stood somewhere between these conflicting views. It remained for a newcomer to the Senate, Irving Lves of New York, who had been placed on the committee, to move into a commanding position. He virtually held control of the committee, and forced it to report a more reasonable bill.

Through all the parliamentary skirmishing—and it lasted for months—the drastic measure passed by the House, regulating not only management-labor relations but the internal affairs of unions themselves, was killed in the Senate. A more reasonable bill emerged from the Senate only after a long struggle.

Ultimately, when the House and Senate conference committee convened to resolve the legislative disagreements it reported a measure which contained two provisions which stunned organized labor. One stipulation outlawed the closed shop. Another denied access to the National Labor Relations Board to those unions whose officers had not filed a sworn disclaimer of any connections with communism. There were other provisos to which labor also objected. The bill was admittedly "tough." The dilemma it posed to Harry Truman was even tougher.

Organized labor, which had made no constructive suggestions for improving labor-management relations, looked upon it as a blueprint for servitude. They attacked it as "the slave-labor bill," and declared political warfare. If Harry Truman should approve the measure, he could never hope for labor's political support. Conversely, the general public demanded new labor legislation. If Truman vetoed the bill, he would lose large blocs of nonunion votes. As a final blow, Henry A. Wallace, since leaving the Cabinet at Truman's request, had shown an inclination to become a presidential candidate. If Truman signed the bill, it might provide the final nudge to start Henry Wallace off on a third-party campaign. In that event, the Democratic party could well be defeated in 1948, and might never recover.

The President during this period was in Canada, but when he

returned he vetoed first the tax measure, then followed it quickly with a long and vigorous veto of the Taft-Hartley labor bill. For days, his special counsel, Clark Clifford, met secretly at the White House with Democratic Congressmen, hearing their arguments, and in turn reciting objections to the bill. The Department of Justice, the Department of Labor, the National Labor Relations Board, and the Department of Commerce all supplied separate bills of particulars against the Congressional enactment. In brief, they reasoned that the bill would promote rather than minimize industrial conflict.

In addition, evidence revealed another—hitherto undisclosed—consideration which determined Harry Truman upon rejecting the bill. The Taft-Hartley law, strange as it might seem, lay athwart international politics. Everywhere throughout Europe, the United States stood face to face with actual or potential communism. Truman's Greek-Turkish relief policy had drawn the lines for what amounted to a world struggle between capitalism and communism.

Communism, moreover, laid violent claim to being liberal. At the same time, the unregimented liberal forces of Europe looked to the United States for guidance. The President's signature to a bill regarded by American labor as a "slave act" might be a shattering blow at the hopes and sympathies of those very liberal elements in Europe that were opposing communism, and at the same time would bolster the Communist argument that the United States was engaged in a campaign of capitalistic imperialism. This factor could not be paraded publicly, or be dilated upon in a veto message.

Section by section, the President, drawing upon the reports from his departments, analyzed the Taft-Hartley bill and then rejected it. Indignantly, Senator Ives, no extremist himself, said the President had presumed that the law would have "the worst possible administration." Lee Pressman, the left-wing attorney for the CIO, had himself analyzed the bill in similar terms. The Republicans were quick to claim that Harry Truman had accepted the "CIO party line" reasoning. The similarity between Pressman's

conclusions and the President's veto was indeed marked, but arose from the fact that Pressman had in many instances urged his arguments upon the very men and agencies which later reported to the President.

Senator Taft went over the President's veto arguments point by point in a radio broadcast, stating heatedly, "This is simply not true," on many of the President's conclusions. Taft also remarked, pointedly, that the President obviously had had time to study the bill for only three days after his return from Canada, while Congress had worked upon it for fully seven months. Whose judgment was best?

Labor reacted instantly. Wildcat strikes of protest flurried in scores of industries. John L. Lewis, guided by a staff of attorneys, showed that the act was hardly a "slave-labor bill." He won the most favorable contract in his union's history, with the additional stipulation that his men would operate the coal mines when "willing and able."

Without a word, the House overrode the President's veto. In the Senate, a group of prolabor members talked interminably while they waited for the import of the President's arguments to register upon the public. Some of these same legislators had denounced, privately, the President's handling of wages, prices, and strikes. They believed that his administration had acted stupidly.

For his part, the President did not stop with his message. He invited a score of Democrats and one Republican Senator, Milton Young of North Dakota, to have lunch with him. Then in plain language he told them that he had meant every word of his veto. He said that he had not registered his objections in the hope they would be overridden. Rather he earnestly hoped the Senate of the United States would sustain him. It was somewhat the same argument he gave to Senator Barkley: "I want you to know you have my unqualified support [in opposition to overriding], and it is my fervent hope, for the good of the country, that you and your colleagues will be successful in your efforts to keep this bill from becoming law."



Harry Truman could be charged with playing politics. Nevertheless, he had vetoed and then used all his persuasion to sustain that veto in the Senate. The Senate overrode his objections with votes to spare. Democratic Senator Walter F. George of Georgia spoke the decisive note when he said, "In my opinion this is the final test of whether government is to function or whether minority groups, highly organized, are to dictate the type of legislation that we shall have. If there were no other reason for the passage of this legislation, I should assuredly support it."

Harry Truman accepted the results with apparent sincerity. He was beaten by the two-thirds majority required for overriding his veto.

"For my part," he said when the Taft-Hartley Act became the law of the land, "I want to make it unmistakably clear, that, insofar as it lies within my power as President, I shall see that this law is well and faithfully administered. . . ."

"I call upon labor and management, therefore, to exercise patience and moderation in accommodating themselves to the changes made necessary by this act.

"Industrial strife at this critical time can result only in economic dislocation injurious to all of us. If it should reach serious proportions it would threaten the stability of our economy and endanger the peace of the world.

"We can not afford such a result. It is our solemn duty to make every effort to make industrial peace under the provisions of the new law. We must all do our part."

Organized labor, it was evident, would not submit to the bill and its restrictive provisions. Harry Truman might pledge impartial enforcement, but the issue was not settled. It remained as "unfinished business" for the 1948 campaign, as the Truman administration, the Republican party, and organized labor prepared to carry their cases to a higher tribunal.

The tremendous labor disturbances which marked and wracked the Truman administration were destined to be projected into 1948. Both major political parties would see to that.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### FOREIGN TRADE?

**I**N TENSE MANEUVERING characterized Harry Truman's first session with a politically hostile Congress. Few bills were considered on their merits alone, wholly separate from their effect on the man in the White House and his political prospects. This consideration applied even to minor legislation. It was many times magnified on major policy. A President saddled with an unfriendly Congress is fair game for the dominant party. He certainly can expect little mercy from those on Capitol Hill intent upon frustrating his program and electing a President of their own political persuasion.

The danger in such political warfare is not encountered merely in domestic issues. In international questions it poses to the world spectacle of a nation divided within itself. This seriously hampers the successful conduct of foreign policy.

American bipartisan foreign policy came through rough days, but succeeded admirably in presenting one face to the world. That it survived through 1947 was due largely to Senator Vandenberg and to the administration. However, there were those within the Republican majority who sharply challenged Vandenberg's support of bipartisanship, and complained that the Republican Congress was being made accessory after the fact as in the case of the Greek-Turkish loan program. Many felt that the time had come to write an end to bipartisanship in foreign affairs and for the Republicans to strike out for themselves. Vandenberg's counsel and guidance were accepted not without challenge, and the battle within the party caucuses ranged itself around the point that America was dissipating her energies and spending her substance on so-called relief programs which yielded neither substantial relief nor political allies abroad.

Early in the Eightieth Congress, a strong undertone of revolt on

foreign policy, particularly its economic aspects, became manifest. Within the House Ways and Means Committee certain members on the Republican side began to talk openly of curbing the administration's foreign trade program. An international conference on trade agreements was called at Geneva, Switzerland, with some twenty-eight nations participating, and approximately two thousand items were scheduled for possible tariff revisions. The Republicans on the House committee had regularly opposed an extension of the reciprocal trade policy, devised and enunciated by Cordell Hull. They tried to circumvent the program and the administration with restrictive amendments. These men challenged the widely accepted theory that reciprocal trade concessions provided an avenue for expanded trade benefits.

If there was one specific philosophy upon which all of the divergent elements of the Democratic party could agree wholeheartedly during the Roosevelt administrations, it was upon the wisdom of the trade program. Truman, early in his administration, obtained from the Seventy-ninth Congress a two-year extension of the trade program, with authority to reduce the tariffs 50 per cent below the existing levels, as a further inducement to the expansion of international exchange of goods and services.

Now, in the early stages of the Eightieth, certain Republicans on the House committee made known their desire to repeal this same reciprocal trade program, which still had a year to run.

The lead in this discussion was taken by Chairman Harold Knutson of Minnesota, a spokesman for dairy interests; by Bertrand W. Gearhart of California, representing the citrus fruit growers; and Thomas Jenkins of Ohio, spokesman for the pottery interests which flourished in his state and district. These men wanted at least to curb the reciprocal trade program, as the next best alternative, in their opinion, to outright repeal. It was evident from the outset that repeal could not be accomplished. Harry Truman, it appeared certain, would veto any repeal bill, and the Senate would with equal certainty sustain such a veto.

In this situation, Vandenberg, President pro tempore of the Senate, and Eugene Millikin of Colorado, chairman of the Senate

Finance Committee, began negotiations with the State Department. They sought major concessions whereby the President, if the Federal Tariff Commission decided that any agreement was operating to the detriment of an American industry, should thereupon suspend the agreement under terms of a clause to be written into each instrument. This the administration declined to accept, on the grounds that it would make the President's action subsidiary to a lesser authority. It was finally decided, and agreed upon by the administration, that each instrument should embody an escape clause, to be invoked and exercised by the President whenever he (not the Tariff Commission) should determine that an industry was suffering by reason of tariff concessions.

The Vandenberg-Millikin formula seemed constructive and reasonable, but it did not satisfy the high-tariff members of the House. The formula, however, blocked efforts for repeal. It was evident that if Vandenberg and Millikin opposed any repeal bill, it would be defeated.

Knutson, Gearhart, Jenkins, and others might possibly put a bill through the House, but they would certainly be stopped in the Senate. However, this fact was only grudgingly accepted on the House side.

These developments amounted to a portent of major significance. Hundreds of Republican newspapers and literally thousands of manufacturers and industrialists who supported the Republican party had in the past declared their support of a reciprocal reduction of tariff barriers, and announced their conviction that this process promoted international exchange and their own trade. Yet here was an element in a Republican Congress that was intent on striking down that same program, which would have to be extended affirmatively in early 1948 or expire of inaction.

The Vandenberg-Millikin formula did not represent all that would satisfy either the Republicans or the administration. But it appeared to be the best possible compromise of what threatened to become a conflict seriously endangering foreign policy. It retained in the President's hands control over foreign trade policy, and at the same time made him responsible for deciding cases where tariff

concessions might injure United States industries. The administration proceeded with its preliminary discussions for the Geneva conference, and sent a top-flight business man, lately appointed to the State Department: Undersecretary William L. Clayton.

While Clayton was engrossed in negotiations at Geneva, Senate Bill 814 was passed. This provided House Republicans with the opportunity they had watched for. This measure established a government price-support program for the domestic wool industry. This industry is of minor economic importance to the nation as a whole, but vitally important to the sheep raisers and wool-growers of eleven western and mountain states. Neither the wool-growers themselves, nor their Senate spokesmen, asked more than a price program. Admittedly it would cost the government tens of millions of dollars a year. But it was considered justified because wool, as demonstrated in the war, was a strategic material.

United States mills were turning increasingly to the cheaper, and better, Australian and New Zealand clips, importing rather than paying the higher domestic price for an inferior grade. In consequence, American woolgrowers were desperate. When the bill reached the House, it was first reported from the Agriculture Committee as a straight price-support measure, then was suddenly recalled. There followed a week of indecision, after which the Committee, working under the direction of Majority Leader Charles Halleck of Indiana, completely redrafted it.

What emerged was not a price-support measure at all, but a time bomb planted under the entire reciprocal trade program. It provided that upon a finding by the Federal Tariff Commission that rates were so low as to admit wool (meaning Australian and New Zealand wool) to the competitive disadvantage of the domestic clip, the President should impose a 50 per cent import fee. While it was argued that the bill was discretionary in its intent, the language clearly made it mandatory that the President invoke the fee. In Geneva, the Australian and New Zealand delegations promptly demanded a showdown, making it plain that they were ready to leave the conference if the bill should be permitted to become law. It struck directly at the heart of their economy. Suf-

ficient safeguards, they said, were already provided to American industry in the Vandenberg-Millikin formula. This new proposal meant virtually a return to economic warfare and economic isolationism.

Certainly, the psychology of the bill was extremely bad. It amounted to a warning signal to every nation engaged in trade negotiations, and constituted a broad legislative hint that in June, 1948, at the latest, Republicans would either kill the entire trade program by refusing to extend the legal authority, or so severely hamstring it with restrictions as to make it virtually inoperative. Moreover, it was taken in Geneva as a demonstration of bad faith on the part of the American Congress at the very time when the United States was professing to take the lead in negotiations for reviving world trade shattered by the war.

Senators stormed at the extremity of the bill. But their efforts to rewrite it acceptably in a House-Senate conference failed. The bill was sent to President Truman with the import-fee provisions, plus authority to invoke import quotas. Secretary Clayton flew back from Geneva, in the meantime, and spent hours trying to convince the House members that the bill would wreck the trade negotiations, then embracing upwards of 2,000 items besides wool. Despite the extended arguments of Clayton and repeated warnings by Secretary of State Marshall that such a plan could not be countenanced, the measure went to the White House. The political strategy of House Republicans seemed apparent: if Harry Truman should veto the bill, he would risk the anger of woolgrowers in the eleven states. If he should let it become law, and then fail to enforce its provisions rigorously, he would still be open to political attack as in the case of veto.

President Truman vetoed the bill instantly.

"This bill contains features which would have an adverse effect on our international relations and which are not necessary for the support of our domestic wool growers," he said in a terse message.

"The enactment of a law providing for additional barriers to the importation of wool at the very moment when this government is taking the leading part in a United Nations Conference at

Geneva called for the purpose of reducing trade barriers and of drafting a Charter for an International Trade Organization, in an effort to restore the world to economic peace, would be a tragic mistake. It would be a blow to our leadership in world affairs. It would be interpreted around the world as a first step on that same road to economic isolationism down which we and other countries traveled after the first World War with such disastrous consequences. I cannot approve such an action.

"The wool growers of this country are entitled to receive support. There is still ample time for this Congress to pass wool legislation consistent with our international responsibilities and the interests of our economy as a whole. I urge that the Congress do so promptly . . ."

The Senate, on the same day (June 26, 1947) repassed its original price-support bill, and returned it to the House where Republicans, who had engineered their suspected trap for the President, characterized the Senators as a group of political weaklings.

Immediately before the adjournment of the first session of the Eightieth Congress, however, the House leadership called up the new price support bill, passed it, and sent it to the White House where President Truman immediately approved it.

The significance of the proposed bill lay in its possible deleterious effects upon international trade and the United States' position of economic leadership in the world. A strong group of Republicans had demonstrated their unfriendliness toward the trade program, their desire to terminate it, and finally a willingness to seize upon the relatively unimportant domestic wool industry as a vehicle for torpedoing the international trade conferences. Domestically, the measure had little economic significance, but definite political import. Internationally, the bill was dynamite.

The lack of genuine conviction behind it became evident when the Congress, having had its fling, passed a bill which the President could accept. But the issue of reciprocal trade was by no means settled. The legislative maneuverings were ominous. The trade program would come up for renewal before the election.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### HIGH COST OF LIVING

**D**URING MOST of his first two years as head of the Democratic party, Harry Truman was on the defensive. His defensive was due to unfamiliarity with his job, inability to mobilize public opinion, and inability to carry the fight to the weaknesses of the opposition.

What Truman appeared unable to accomplish, the march of economics might.

The high cost of living became much more than an unhappy dream.

The situation not only gave President Truman and his entire administration uninterrupted concern, it also caused a deep restlessness in the Republican party. They remembered how the Democrats had been defeated in 1920 because the people were reminded of "H.C.L.," the high cost of living.

Now business was clicking along at record levels. Profits reached the fabulous sum of fifteen billion per year. Wages were revised upward again and again.

When Henry A. Wallace wrote a book in 1945 advocating 60,000,000 jobs, it was the sensation of its time. By 1947 the nation had passed 60,000,000 employed. Total unemployment amounted to less than 2,000,000.

President Roosevelt in the late 1930's once spoke of the possibility of a ninety-billion-dollar-a-year national income. In 1947 the national income reached more than twice that figure.

America was better dressed, better fed, enjoyed greater luxuries than ever before—all at a higher price.

Indeed, the nation stood perilously close to an uncontrolled spiral of inflation, that "vicious circle" of rising wages and increasing costs from which Woodrow Wilson had said there was no ready escape. If the nation became caught in such a whirlwind,



the ensuing ruin would be irreparable. Then, too, prosperity was not universal. As the President's council of economic advisers reported in mid-year, while the increase in farm and wage income benefited large segments of the population, many groups of low wage and fixed income earners were severely pinched.

Truman's economic advisers urged rapid reduction of the public debt, continuation of the rent controls, enactment of a housing program, increase of minimum wages, and increases of social-security benefits. All these means were intended to level out the benefits of apparent prosperity and buttress the national economy against a possible recession. The Eightieth Congress had not acted on these recommendations.

"The real purchasing power of consumers' current incomes has steadily declined," the economic advisers concluded ominously "notwithstanding high employment and rising wage rates."

Truman showed his concern over this process when he addressed Congress early in 1947.

"An important source of danger to our economy is the possibility that prices might be raised to such an extent that the consuming public could not purchase the tremendous volume of goods and services to be produced in 1947," he said.

"We all know that recent price increases have denied to many of our workers much of the value of recent wage increases. Farmers have found that a large part of their increased income has been absorbed by increased prices. While some of our people have received raises in income which exceeded price increases, the majority have not. Those persons who live on modest fixed incomes: retired persons living on pensions, for example, and workers whose incomes are relatively inflexible, such as teachers and other civil servants, have suffered hardship.

"It is up to industry not only to hold the line on existing prices, but to make reductions whenever profits justify such action.

"It is up to labor to refrain from pressing for unjustified wage increases that will force increases in the price level."

But the economy would not be restrained by preachment. The

unwieldy control of OPA had given way. There seemed to be no effective resistance to prices moving steadily upward.

Leon Henderson, formerly head of OPA, put it bluntly to Senator Taft's Joint Congressional Economic Committee.

"Certainly the past year has not provided any demonstration that as a nation we have learned how to manage our economic affairs," he said. . . . "In spite of the magnificent wartime record the fruits of our stabilization program were thrown to the winds in the hasty abandonment of the wartime controls. . . . What the business community wanted and what the Congress gave it was the restoration of the unrestricted operation of supply and demand, before we were ready for free markets, the restoration of business as usual, with all the planlessness and all the irresponsibility that that meant under these circumstances. Canada and England acted more wisely."

On one side of the economic ledger, between June, 1946, and March, 1947, consumer prices rose 17 per cent, wholesale prices 32 per cent. "There was more inflation during these nine months than in the entire period of general price control," said Henderson, "and three to four times as much as in the 37 months from the 'hold-the-line' program of May 1943 to the end of effective price controls in June 1946." The effective buying power of consumers dropped 4.4 per cent between the middle of 1946 and early 1947. "All in all, we have today the most distorted distribution of national purchasing power of which there is any record in our history." And worse was still to come.

Was the national economy fused for an explosion? In mid-1947, Truman and his administration endorsed the Newburyport, Massachusetts, plan of voluntary price reductions by the merchants. This had some slight psychological effect, but in the main it fizzled because it did not go to the heart of the trouble. Then, in a newspaper interview, Senator Taft emphasized that foreign demands and the international relief programs had a bearing on the soaring price level. President Truman heatedly denounced the Republican leader. Truman said Taft followed the "boom and bust" school of economics. Taft replied, "what I object to is the

President's inconsistent talk about lowering prices, when every policy of his administration has increased prices, and is still doing so." How? By vetoing the first OPA bill and leaving a hiatus of nonregulation at a crucial period, said Taft; by wage-increase policies, by opposition to budget and tax reductions, by rejecting labor legislation, and by exaggerated international credit reflecting itself in the demand pressure on prices.

This sputtering political debate settled nothing. The plain facts were that Senator Taft and the Republican party, aided by dissident Democrats in the minority, had combined to scuttle all effective price controls. Thereupon, Harry Truman, under political pressure, had scrapped what controls the Congress had left him. At the same time, the administration had supported wage rises and opposed price increases, while international demands, supported in part at least by American credits advanced by the administration, were exerting an upward pressure on prices. The administration preached and exhorted, but to no avail. Congressional policy terminating price regulation had been positive and unmistakable; the administration pressure against price increases had been demonstrably ineffective. Taft could attack much in Truman's policy, a great deal that was debatable and highly controversial. At the same time, it was indisputable that the Republican party had not only promulgated but implemented a policy of economic laissez-faire in a time of extreme strain and danger.

There arrived in the Republican Congress in 1947 a man who talked with disquieting frankness on this entire subject. He had little sympathy for political tongue-twisting. He came from a labor state, and he often looked skeptically upon his own party managers.

"After having seen the failure of price control measures [on the black market] and recognizing the necessity for the operation of a free economy, we on this side of the aisle [Republicans], in all good faith, assured the people of the country that the decontrol of prices would bring the relief they so sorely needed," said Senator Raymond Baldwin of Connecticut. "Now it is up to us to demonstrate that we can, and will, do something to provide lower

prices, particularly on the necessities our people now find it difficult to buy. . . .

"The fact is perfectly clear that something can and must be done to change the growing trend toward higher prices . . ."

The facts that Baldwin raised were uncomfortable. There was no more black market in automobiles. But new cars were being sold in secondhand lots at 33 to 60 per cent markups above established retail prices. Clothing had gone up from 20 to 50 per cent. Bread, milk, meat, potatoes, shoes, shirts, sheets—almost everything on the retail lists—had soared on the wings of price tags.

Whereas the Truman administration had offered weak opposition to price increases on the one hand, and advocated on the other wage boosts contributing to inflationary pressures (or at least the psychology of inflation), the Republican managers of the Congress, holding absolute control in the Eightieth and a strategic nominal control in the Seventy-ninth, had actively promoted policies which once written into law contributed heavily to inflationary tendencies.

The legislative policies had served to boost prices, wages, and profits in nearly every field and segment of the economy to fantastic levels. Nothing had been accomplished to curb inflation; everything that had been done seemed to encourage it. The economy became flushed with a fever of prosperity. But, beneath the ruddy complexion, the strong and pounding pulse and the apparent glow of health, there was a dangerous condition. Who was responsible? Democrat Harry Truman, or the Republican party? Republicans by the end of 1947 were as indignant in denying responsibility as the Democrats were zealous in attaching the blame to them. The question was an issue for the national election in 1948. The case history of this economic fever, however, left no doubt that while Harry Truman had contributed by sins of omission, the policies of the Republican party had contributed by commission of legislative acts.

The administration had offered labor a formula for increases offsetting the loss in take-home pay occasioned by elimination of overtime wages during the war years. But what labor obtained

from the administration, business largely succeeded in getting through Congress. Overshadowing these considerations were the plenitude of money in circulation, enormous savings and credit, public impatience to be rid of regulations, the desire for profits, the great volume of export-trade bidding in the United States market, United States government buying for the mammoth foreign-relief programs—all these competed in driving prices skyward.

President Truman jeopardized his program of European relief, and the nonpartisan conduct of foreign relations, when he recalled Congress in November of 1947. In the same breath in which he asked for relief funds to forestall a Communist seizure of the French, Italian, and Austrian governments, he raised anew the old and aggravating issue of domestic economic controls. Inflation was a sore subject with the Republican party, the party which would have to provide the bulk of votes for any European assistance program.

Truman and his advisers hesitated long—until the night before Truman submitted his message—before they decided, apparently with an eye on political advantage, that it was wise to reactivate, in the same message, the debate over domestic controls.

The President went all the way with his program. He asked for restoration of controls on consumer credit, regulation of commodity markets, retention of export controls, further allocation of transportation facilities, regulation of livestock and poultry marketing, allocation and rationing of scarce commodities, rent controls, price regulations. In short, what the President requested was a reinstatement of all the controls which the Seventy-ninth Democratic and Eightieth Republican Congresses had fought to eliminate.

Senator Taft took to the radio to declare that what Truman had advocated was a page torn from the CIO-PAC book; that it amounted to outright regimentation. Having helped rid the country of these controls, the GOP majority in Congress was not going to renew them. But if it should, it would be blamed by everyone irritated by such measures; if it refused, organized labor, con-

sumers, and everyone affected by rising prices would certainly lay the blame on the Republican Congress. Republican leaders privately admitted that Truman had put them "over a barrel."

In defending the President's proposals, administration spokesmen like Secretaries Snyder, Harriman, Krug, and Anderson were vague and indefinite in describing the manner in which the controls would be used, or the degree to which they were desirable. They presented an inconclusive picture of what might happen. The case they succeeded in making was weak. Republicans vowed that the worst thing they could do to Harry Truman would be to give him everything he had asked for, and let him take the blame for the consequences. But, they also argued, to do so might mean taking a fearful gamble, that he might proceed to "wreck the country" and perhaps world economy—then depending heavily on United States production—by ill-advised exercise of the controls he had requested. The risk, said the GOP, was too great.

Federal Reserve chairman Eccles, disagreeing openly with the administration, provided the very peg for refusal. The President's program, Eccles told the Congress, was mainly palliative. It did not reach the root of the trouble. He proposed instead a drastic screwing down of credit, governmental and private, less government spending, higher interest rates, less government lending for housing and other projects.

Prices had reached record heights, and Congress was getting the blame. The Republican majority accepted neither Truman's nor Eccles's proposals. It was not all of one mind within the party. Scholarly Senator Ralph Flanders of Vermont was urging meat rationing, on a preparatory and stand-by basis, to be invoked when and if the expected acute shortage of meats occurred. Others in the party were deeply discontented with the cautious, reserved attitude their party took toward the enactment of some measure of controls.

The Republican leadership recognized that something had to be done. A record of some sort had to be made. To accomplish this, they devised a program of "voluntary" controls to be carried out by industry and business, with a legislative exemption from anti-

trust law prosecution for any agreements made in devising controls. When the House killed even this program, Senator Taft moved with alacrity to put the bill through the Senate. The House reconsidered and passed it in the last hours of the emergency session. The political chestnuts were pulled at least partly out of the fire. Harry Truman signed the measure, but said it would not work. It was the best he could get. Oregon's generally indignant Republican Wayne Morse scolded his party, called the measure a "political-gesture anti-inflation bill," and said Congress had properly deserved the rebuke Truman had given it for such "buck-passing" legislation.

President Truman renewed his pressure for domestic controls in his "State of the Union" message.

"The events which have occurred since I presented my ten-point anti-inflation program to Congress on November 17 have made it even clearer that all ten points are essential," he insisted.

"High prices must not be our means of rationing.

"We must deal effectively and at once with the high cost of living.

"We must stop the spiral of inflation.

"I trust that within the shortest possible time the Congress will make available to the Government the weapons that are so desperately needed in the fight against inflation."

The President failed utterly to dramatize the issue. Congress heard his exhortations with a hostile chilliness. It did extend the export and rental controls after a long and tiring debate, but in general Congress simply marked time and awaited developments.

Suddenly, in early February, the severe shocks began that shook the Truman administration like thunder. In a period of ten days, the commodity markets suffered the most serious decline in a century for a life period of time. Day after day, the declines amounted to the maximum allowed for grains and cotton; prices of cattle, hogs, and wool skidded precipitously. Retail prices began falling. In ten days, wholesale prices for many commodities were off as much as 17 to 20 per cent. The severity of the market decline took the steam out of Truman's anti-inflation program. Truman

insisted that the need for his program was not in the least adjourned by the market drop; and indeed it was by no means clear that the decline was the prelude to deflation. Taft said Truman's program looked "foolish" in view of the market's behavior. Congress was not going to strap the country down again under a system of governmental rules and regulations.

Instead, it was more concerned in trying to ascertain if this was just the first of a series of economic earthquakes. It seemed obvious that the price peak had been passed. Nobody knew how rough the downhill journey might prove to be.



## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### THE HOUSING FIASCO

**B**Y 1947, PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT's famous phrase "ill-housed" had assumed far greater poignancy for millions of American families. A house which ordinarily would sell for \$5,000 was bid up to twice that figure, and no questions asked.

More than 2,500,000 families in the United States were doubling up with relatives and friends, having no prospects of living under their own roof within a reasonable period of time.

A home normally renting for \$75 a month now had an asking price of \$200, and usually brought, on the final negotiations, \$150.

The course of such ridiculous economics had literally placed housing beyond the reach of most families. Building one's own home amounted to an excursion into high realms of financial speculation.

The urgency of housing had been appreciated by the administrations, both of Roosevelt and Truman.

"When we think of the America of tomorrow, we think of many things," President Roosevelt had said at Soldiers Field in Chicago, in his "economic bill of rights" speech of October 28, 1944.

"One of them is American homes—in our cities, in our villages, and on our farms. Millions of our people have never had homes worthy of American standards—well built homes with electricity and plumbing and air and sunlight.

"The demand for homes and our capacity to build them call for a program of well over a million homes a year for at least ten years. Private industry can build and finance the vast majority of these homes. Government can and will assist and encourage private industry to do this, as it has for many years. For those very low income groups that cannot possibly afford decent homes, the Fed-

eral Government should continue to assist local housing authorities in meeting that need."

This thought was not lost on Harry Truman. Campaigning for Vice-president in 1944, he had said, "The housing field should provide a whole new industry for this country, greater in size and importance than the automobile industry ever was. . . . The tenements should be torn down and replaced with new, wide and handsome boulevards lined with five- and six-story apartment structures of the most modern type. Such structures should have playgrounds on the roofs, where children can safely play and get the light and air they need. . . ."

But, after more than three years, America was not erecting the homes which it needed in anything like the volume required. Those homes which were being built, were produced at exorbitant prices and often with poor materials and shoddy workmanship. The G.I. Bill of Rights, with provisions for guaranteed loans, had offered some assistance and aid to veterans in need of homes, but also helped start the inflation because government loans afforded the means of bidding up prices.

Building materials, in 1947, stood highest of all items on the Department of Labor cost-of-living statistics, at 178.8 per cent of the 100 index figure for 1926. They were higher than farm products, food, fuel, or metals. Statistics are inevitably dry, often unintelligible except to economists, and susceptible of varying interpretations. But added together, they amounted to a picture of inadequacy and failure, of exorbitant costs for labor and building materials, of rentals increased by Congressional action and agreed upon by Harry Truman only with the utmost reluctance, compelled by the necessity of saving some semblance of rental controls, a spectacle of only a few homes at higher prices, and more homeless at higher costs. The President's Council of Economic Advisers summarized the entire situation succinctly in mid-1947.

"The housing goal has been set by a National Housing Agency study at one million residential units in 1947 and a million and a half in subsequent years. Present indications are that not more than 750,000 units will be built this year," the Council reported.

"Moreover, this housing has been available only at high prices and has thus failed to relieve the needs of many families most in need of accommodation. . . .

"Up to now, the housing shortage has been so serious that buyers have been available at almost any price. But already, high prices are preventing the bulk of new housing from reaching desired levels. If not reduced, these prices will lead inevitably to a decline in housing construction when the limited market made up of those who can buy in spite of cost has been served. Nowhere are cost reductions more important to the whole economy than in the case of constructions. . . ."

Early in the Truman administration, a series of critical mistakes were made. Priorities orders were abandoned. This permitted the channeling of critically scarce materials away from residential construction to the more profitable and financially less hazardous field of industrial building. This action was taken to expand the production of sorely needed peacetime goods. Contractors scrambled to take industrial contracts for warehouses, factories, stores, even race tracks and recreation centers, rather than devote their attention to the more speculative, less profitable, and smaller units of home construction. The Truman administration knew and appreciated this fact, but it did not develop the boldness or determination required to remedy the situation. A pounds of nails became something of a fable. It remained so for several years.

The Seventy-ninth Congress, at President Truman's urgings, enacted a public-housing program with \$600,000,000 of Federal subsidies. This represented an acceptable beginning, but one that fell far short of the realities, and \$125,000,000 below the President's own estimates. The goal was 1,500,000 home units of constructions each year for several years, until the shortage of homes, aggravated during the war years, is met.

President Truman started the program off with fanfare. He chose one of the most politically attractive men in the country to head it, former Democratic Mayor Wilson Wyatt of Louisville, Kentucky. What Wyatt lacked in diplomacy and business understanding he more than supplied in spirit and optimism. He

was named as the housing expediter. Perhaps no official ever came upon the Washington scene with more enthusiasm, less real authority, and less realization of the handicaps than did Mayor Wilson Wyatt.

Over-all estimates revealed that America needed 5,000,000 homes as quickly as possible. Since new families were being created faster than new homes, this estimate was on the conservative side. Priorities on housing materials, when it became apparent that the demand for homes would not compel a channeling of materials to that field, were reinstituted, then rescinded again.

Wyatt began approving subsidies and giving encouragement with all the means at his command. He was full of schemes for enlisting the support of Congress, the cooperation of organized labor, and the training of apprentice carpenters, plasterers, plumbers, and other artisans.

At the same time price controls were being abandoned with a steady momentum. With them went the control over the allocation of steel, lumber, plaster, copper piping, and other materials. It was a case of the highest bidder, and the devil take the hindmost. Only one thing could result. Costs skyrocketed. The materials were bid up out of sight by contractors eager to fill industrial and residential needs clamoring for satisfaction at any price.

No industry in America is more vital than the construction industry. At the same time probably no single industry is more bedeviled by fly-by-night, financially unreliable operators, eager to take an unconscionable if easy profit and declare bankruptcy rather than render an accounting. What the building industry needed was a gigantic source of supply, against which could be set up a reasonable measure of financial responsibility and construction performance; a source of supply that could command and obtain materials at a reasonable price, and if they were not forthcoming, produce its own materials in subsidiary factories. No such central supply station was available.

The housing program was chopped up between Wyatt's housing agency, the Snyder office of reconversion, the John D. Small

Office of Civilian Production, and the Bowles Office of Price Administration. Housing became the center of a tug of war between government bureaus. Each competed for authority. Each thought and operated within the circumscribed scope of its immediate problems. Synder wanted reconversion and the elimination of controls. Small wanted an expanding volume of civilian production. Bowles wanted restrained prices. Wyatt prayed incessantly for more houses. Harry Truman wanted a successful administration. The result was that everybody got nothing.

The administration did not turn to the real troubles with the housing industry. Untouched was the hamstringing, high-priced "featherbedding" practices, requiring one labor union to tighten the ring nuts on the kitchen sink and an entirely separate crew to move in the sink itself. Left undisturbed were the costly, often impractical, outmoded building codes. Untouched remained the competition in bidding for critical materials and builders' supplies. While still a Senator, Harry Truman, on behalf of his committee, rendered a report warning of a critical shortage of lumber, but no real constructive measures were taken in his first two years in office to expand the production of this material.

It was ironic, though perhaps symptomatic, that this entire program, the substance which Wilson Wyatt had sought to transfuse with it by sheer energy and personality, was shipwrecked on a relatively minor matter. Wyatt came to believe that prefabricated housing offered one solution, and he was intent upon expanding this field of production to the limit. Some prefabricated homes were being turned out in small volume by a half-dozen major industrial concerns. What was needed was not passing attention, but a major effort.

The Lustron Corporation of Chicago, a firm of financial comparability though inexperienced in the prefabricated housing field, arranged with Wyatt to undertake mass production of prefabricated homes. A Chicago bank agreed to underwrite the program for \$20,000,000, and the company applied to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in Washington, then headed by Truman's good friend George Allen, for another \$52,000,000.

Wyatt approved the loan, which was within his scope of authority. But the officers of the company, according to the RFC, were going to put up only \$36,000. This was not considered nearly enough. The RFC arrived at the conclusion that the loan was not justified. Wyatt, intense in his determination to have prefabricated houses, thereupon became insistent upon the loan. RFC and Allen were adamant against it.

At this point, in November of 1946, Wilson Wyatt had arrived at a point of almost total governmental frustration. He had responsibility and paper authority. But he had not reckoned on the inter-bureau struggle required to put his plans in operation. Wyatt saw only houses. RFC looked first at financial solvency and demonstrated ability. RFC took the position that if Lustron wanted to be subsidized in its project, the matter should be taken to Congress. What it amounted to was that while RFC would subsidize safe risks, it would not lend its money, even for houses, on unproved ventures.

Wyatt took his case to the President and pleaded all the arguments for risk housing. Truman, after weeks of hearing arguments and delaying the decision, finally sided with the RFC. The loan would not be made. Wyatt resigned, and thereafter, as before, the housing program limped along. Truman had not accorded Wyatt the authority or the presidential cooperation which the responsibility of his office demanded. Nor had Congress given a full measure of support.

Nowhere could a program of greater promise, more fervid exhortation, and less performance be found. Its importance was fully realized. But, from the outset, the program was largely a failure. Though publicized, debated, and subsidized, there were lacking the audacity, understanding, and farsightedness essential for success.

One-third of the nation is still ill-housed, and the Truman administration, in spite of brash enthusiasm at the outset, has not met the problem. The 850,000 units per year being built in late 1947 represented, at the most, about half the minimum requirements.

Prices were prohibitive, largely because of the administration, the Congress, and public determination to be rid of controls. The

same factors militated against compulsory channeling of materials into home building. The fumbling conflict of government bureaus had played its part. Indecision and finally lack of drive by the administration lent its enervating influence. Special, vested interests represented by the hard-driving real-estate lobby had contributed their mighty share.

Out of this combination of influences came a multitude of miseries, which tore the social fabric of the nation. They intruded themselves into countless homes and families, into bankruptcy courts and sheriff sales, even into divorce courts, onto police blotters, into hospital records.

Few things were more desperately needed in America than homes. Nothing was more lacking. If a man wanted a home, he hunted, and when he had found it, he paid an extortionate price. If he would not submit to this outrage, others would. Politics, indecision, inadequacy, and economics had left no alternative.

*Part IV*  
**THIS MAN TRUMAN**





## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### PATCHWORK OF ASSOCIATES

**H**ARRY TRUMAN believes in standing by his friends. Less than a month after becoming Vice-president of the United States, he insisted upon walking in the funeral procession of his erstwhile political benefactor, Boss Tom Pendergast of Kansas City, Missouri.

Soon after Truman became President, the epithet "Missouri Gang"—reminiscent of Harding's "Ohio Gang"—became an early mark of his administration. A standing joke in Washington was that many not actually from Missouri were still claiming some remote connection with the "Show Me" State, that having a cornfield and a Midwestern accent were sufficient qualifications for a responsible job in the government.

Harry Truman must have realized when he entered the White House that administrations often rise or fall on the caliber of Presidential appointments. In a very real sense, a President could not afford to have friends. Certainly he must know whom to trust and when.

Since Truman arrived as the Chief Executive along the loyal party route, it might be expected that thousands who could claim they had supported him would descend upon Washington in search of special favors. Moreover, Truman's circle of friendships was limited; not in numbers but in the sense that he did not know intimately many of the men with the best minds and the greatest abilities. True, as chairman of the Senate National Defense Committee Truman had come in close contact with the nation's finest brains during more than three years of war. However, the role of investigator did not often promote mutual companionship. Most of the able executives left government service after the war. Of those who stayed on, many felt the new administration was weak, destined to be more conservative than they could tolerate.

In the light of such inherent handicaps, it was perhaps natural that Truman, thrust into the White House by accident, turned first to those he did know and could trust, those he counted as his real friends.

Truman made some excellent appointments as he proceeded to choose his official family. He realized that no President ever submitted to the United States Senate, which must ratify major appointments, a wholly satisfactory and undebatable list of nominations. The very nature of politics precluded that possibility. Divergent views, and such considerations as liberalism versus conservatism had subjected many Supreme Court nominees to challenge in the past. On similar grounds, the nomination of Henry Wallace as Secretary of Commerce had nearly been defeated. But Harry Truman could not have chosen, as he did in February, 1946, a more controversial nomination than that of Edwin W. Pauley for Undersecretary of the Navy. Yet Truman confidently expected to win confirmation for his friend and political supporter.

Ed Pauley was a man of undoubted courage, a hardheaded politician and a Democrat to the core. He had raised many thousands of dollars for the Democratic National Committee and had earned his own reputation and fortune in the feverishly competitive oil business.

His nomination touched off the United States Senate like an explosion. Pauley was an oilman. The Navy owned vast reserves of oil. It was alleged that Pauley had espoused and energetically urged upon Congress, the Department of Justice, even upon Franklin Roosevelt in the White House, that title to the tideland oil reserves (oil lying under the shoreland between high and low tides) be vested in the various states. It was said further that Pauley had set up a powerful lobby reaching from the California State House through some thirty states, organized to push through Congress a bill giving the states title in uncounted and unassessable billions of barrels of oil. If such title was granted, the states would permit commercial exploitation of the oil reserves at bargain rates in order to collect royalties and taxes.

In these circumstances, it was to be expected that the appoint-

ment of Pauley would bring a violent reaction from the Republican members in the Senate. The Naval Affairs Committee hearings, dominated in the main by Republican Senator Charles W. Tobey of New Hampshire, were long and heated. The evidence mounted that Pauley had lent his prestige and influence, such as these might be, in trying to quash a Department of Justice suit filed in the California District Court by Attorney General Francis Biddle just before he left the Truman Cabinet, to establish Federal title to the tideland deposits.

Former Assistant Attorney General Norman Littell testified that Pauley had indeed sought to quash the suit. He had, said Littell, argued that oil companies would contribute heavily to Democratic campaign chests upon the guarantee that their state-derived titles would not be molested by the legal action.

The *coup de grâce* was administered by that peer of splenetics, Harold L. Ickes, then Secretary of the Interior. Ickes had been summoned to appear. At a Cabinet meeting, Truman had urged that Ickes tell the truth in his testimony but, if possible, "be kind to Ed Pauley."

For his part, Ickes had been growing increasingly uncomfortable in the Truman Cabinet. Yet he was one of the few Roosevelt holdovers who could have remained almost indefinitely. Truman admired his aggressive courage and liked his unvarnished belligerency.

However, when Ickes appeared before the Senate committee considering the Pauley nomination, he read extensive notes from his diary to support Tobey's contention that Pauley, in at least five instances, had compromised the truth. Democrats on the committee, led by Millard F. Tydings of Maryland, instantly challenged Ickes's interpretations. But the damage was done. Ed Pauley was branded on the record to the satisfaction of his political opponents.

Pauley put up a hard fight, but he lost at every round. At last, in the face of ignominious defeat, Harry Truman withdrew his nomination, evidently at Pauley's request.

Truman had, to a degree, compromised himself with his sug-

gestion to Ickes, and when the Secretary of the Interior resigned forthwith, Ickes spared no pains to attach opprobrium and a degree of dishonesty to the administration. It was, he said, impossible to continue his Cabinet duties.

Ickes's resignation and bitter denunciation shook the Truman administration to bedrock. But the President gave no outward sign of it. Publicly the White House seemed unconcerned. Clearly Ickes, a star in the Roosevelt Cabinet, was a valuable man. He was the sourest and the most bilious, withal able and the most admittedly honest, of public administrators. A man given to pettiness, and trivial faultfinding. But he was a strong figure, and it hurt when he bolted the Truman Cabinet.

The first Pauley incident left its mark on the man in the White House. Politicians had complained that Roosevelt was so assertive and vindictive that he never forgot a political defection of even the most minor character. Harry Truman had been welcomed as a man free of such tendencies.

It was not long afterward that Senator Tobey appealed to the President to order more grain set aside for Tobey's New England poultrymen. "This is a Macedonian cry," Tobey telegraphed the President in May, 1946.

The Senator was a man schooled in the classics and well versed in the Bible. He had lapsed into rhetoric such as he might employ when his constituents gathered annually with him on his front lawn in New Hampshire to sing hymns and offer up prayers.

Truman replied harshly and bitterly to Tobey on May 29, 1946, in an amazing letter.

"... It seems to me that you have been making Macedonian cries or yells ever since I have been in the White House," the President wrote with exasperation. "For what reason I could never understand. Your unwarranted attacks on Mr. Pauley almost ruined a good public servant. Between you and Mr. Ickes, you have made it exceedingly difficult for me to get good men to fill the necessary places in the Government. You are still continuing your Macedonian cries, and I hope you will get a lot of pleasure out of them."

The President's letter continued with the statement that when it came to a choice between relief of New England chickens and European humans, he would not hesitate to help the people. As a postscript, he added, in longhand, "Come and see me."

It was the letter of a man who would not give up a fight, yet wanted to remain friendly. When Tobey read it to the United States Senate, many members laughed in spite of themselves, though they felt a little sorry afterward.

When the Congressional bill proposing that title in the tidal oil lands be vested in the states was passed and sent to the White House, Truman vetoed it on the grounds that the Congress was "not the appropriate forum to determine a legal issue pending before the Supreme Court." Moreover, he stated in his message, if the United States owned the oil areas, they should not be given away. On the other hand, if the Supreme Court decided that the United States did not hold title to or have interest in the lands, a quitclaim to the states from the Congress was unnecessary. Eventually, a few months later, the Supreme Court determined that title was in fact vested in the Federal government.

The Pauley episode of 1946 did not help the President. It only accentuated the asperity of Ickes, sullied the reputation of Pauley, and rendered suspect future presidential nominations. Yet Pauley went on, regardless of the blight, such as it seemed, to serve as an adviser on international reparations, and later as an assistant in the reorganization of the War and Navy Departments. While the campaign Tobey had waged was successful in its major endeavor, it did not, and could not, prevent the President from employing the California oilman in other capacities outside of the Senate's right to approve or reject. This showed the innate stubbornness of the man from Missouri and was soon to demonstrate that Truman at best had borrowed grief in the person of his political friend Ed Pauley.

Late in 1947 a series of disclosures began. First Secretary of Agriculture Anderson, then Attorney General Clark lashed out against speculation in commodity markets—both alleging that "insiders," men high in the government, were involved. Truman

himself condemned those who were speculating in the "human misery" of high prices.

This set Republican noses to sniffing. Here was something that might reap big political dividends.

Republican presidential candidate Harold E. Stassen brought the matter into the open by wiring Ed Pauley, then special assistant to the Secretary of the Army, a flat demand for a full disclosure of his market operations. That was enough. The Senate Appropriations Committee, with relentless Homer Ferguson guiding the inquiry, haled before them both Stassen and Pauley. Stassen on two occasions sought to prove by Pauley's "pattern of operations" that he had gambled on "inside" information as to government purchases of commodities. Finally Senator Tydings forced Stassen to admit that he had no concrete evidence to back up his charges. But Pauley was forced to admit that he had profited by more than \$900,000 in commodity market operations while in the government. He indignantly denied ever having possessed any peculiar information unavailable to others. This on the record was indisputable. The pattern did not hold water. Nor could Stassen prove that Secretary Anderson or any other official had "leaked" confidential and useful information to others. Overall, Pauley had made money on a broad range of market operations. He had also, in some instances, sustained losses.

But one thing was undeniable. Pauley was exposed as a speculator. So was Dr. Wallace K. Graham, whom Truman had brought back from Kansas City to be his personal physician, and who likewise had been involved in the market.

Those close to Truman said the President had not the remotest idea that these two men were speculating. Pauley soon resigned from the War Department. Dr. Graham was allowed to remain as White House physician.

If neither man was legally culpable, both were lacking in the strict rectitude of ethical conduct with which public officials are expected to approach their tasks. Likewise, they had not merely gambled in grain; they had gambled, in a sense, with the moral

reputation of the Truman administration and the political fortunes of the President himself.

Julius C. Krug was selected to replace Ickes as Secretary of the Interior. At the time, the appointment of Krug caused those who had predicted that the exit of the self-styled "curmudgeon" meant the end of Truman politically, to revise their opinion. Krug was a man of proved ability, a good administrator.

To replace Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace after his painful departure from the Cabinet, Truman turned to W. Averill Harriman, former Ambassador to Russia and Great Britain, an executive of proved talent and stature.

The appointment of Federal Judge Lewis B. Schwollenbach of the State of Washington as Secretary of Labor was recognized as Truman's bid to enlist the support and cooperation of the unions. Frances Perkins had often asked President Roosevelt to accept her resignation from the Labor post. But it was not until several months after succeeding to the Presidency that Truman consented, and the only woman Cabinet member departed. Truman thereupon turned to Schwollenbach. He was not enthusiastic but finally agreed. Here again, Truman was hunting desperately for someone he could trust. He knew Schwollenbach had ability and he was convinced that he possessed liberal instincts. Truman and Schwollenbach had once sat together in the back row of the Senate. With Sherman Minton of Indiana, they had teamed up as "Young Turks" to challenge Huey P. Long of Louisiana.

Unfortunately, Schwollenbach as Secretary of Labor inherited a virtual state of war between labor and management. His efforts at conciliation were unavailing. He became unhappy, distraught, and finally ill, but he continued to stay on at the insistence of the President. He became victim to the weaknesses inherent in his office, and the exhortations of this studious man were lost in the tide that rolled over him.

Henry Morgenthau left the Cabinet as Secretary of the Treasury, following sharp disputes with President Truman over patronage matters and foreign policy. The two, when Truman



was a Senator, had disagreed over Missouri affairs. There had grown up in Truman's mind over the months a feeling that Morgenthau on a number of occasions adopted an uncompromising attitude on government policy. The Secretary stood insistently for his "hard peace" on Germany, a thesis with which Truman and others in the State, War, and Navy Departments were not in entire accord. When Morgenthau pressed his arguments, the President and the Secretary of the Treasury split.

Morgenthau finally said that he felt he should resign. Truman quickly acquiesced. The exchange of letters was curt and betrayed ill feeling on both sides. Morgenthau, the patrician New York farmer, and Harry Truman, the Missouri dirt farmer, were perhaps not cut out to agree with each other. Truman replaced Morgenthau with Fred Vinson. When he made Vinson Chief Justice, he moved John Snyder, his old World War I friend, into the Treasury.

John Snyder was a successful St. Louis banker, a friendly man of innate caution and conservatism. His was not a strong appointment, but the President could count on him for unswerving loyalty and sympathetic understanding.

Francis Biddle, as Attorney General, was succeeded by Tom C. Clark of Texas, largely at Speaker Sam Rayburn's and Senator Connally's behest. Clark had been head of the Department of Justice's War Frauds Division, was likable and politically acceptable to the Democrats. He did not add any great stature to the Cabinet.

Robert Hannegan, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, became, according to political custom, the Postmaster General. The son of a policeman and a former Collector of Internal Revenue, Hannegan had largely engineered Truman's nomination as Vice-president. An individual of great energy, Hannegan searched always for those who would mend or stretch the most political fences, mainly those who leaned over toward the political left.

When Hannegan resigned as Postmaster General following a serious operation for high blood pressure, Truman surprised everyone by naming a career man, for the first time in history, to be

Postmaster General. He gave the post to Hannegan's first assistant, a big, genial man, Jess Donaldson, who had once lugged mailbags as a mailman walking the rounds.

To fill the position of Secretary of Agriculture held under Roosevelt by Claude Wickard, Truman selected another friend, Clinton P. Anderson, a Congressman from New Mexico. Anderson had considerable ability but took his problems to the White House so often that Truman once told Anderson that if he were President he would understand what real troubles meant. Anderson, a man of courage, possessed a commendable knowledge of agriculture and was well liked on Capitol Hill.

Truman's national defense appointments, logical in their course, were highly commendable. He resolved to appoint Undersecretary of War Robert Patterson to the Supreme Court, but decided at the last minute to name Republican Senator Harold Burton of Ohio instead. Then the President named Patterson to succeed the retiring elder statesman Henry L. Stimson as Secretary of War.

In spite of their disagreements in the early days of the administration over the merger of the armed services, Truman succeeded in keeping James V. Forrestal as Secretary of the Navy. When the departments were finally merged in a manner acceptable to the Navy Secretary, Truman appointed him as head of the combined services. Forrestal, the one remaining member of the Roosevelt Cabinet, was clearly of highest caliber. The fact that Truman persuaded him to stay on, over Forrestal's natural reluctance to remain in government, constituted a real victory for the President.

In the top Cabinet position, Truman had selected James F. Byrnes as Secretary of State. He struck out to establish a firm foreign policy and won the approval of both major political parties. The recall of General Marshall to succeed Byrnes represented a choice clearly above partisan politics. Moreover, the fact that Marshall, a man of outstanding accomplishment, sufficiently respected Truman to give up his own plans for retirement in order to serve him, provided an eloquent tribute to the Chief Executive.

There was little doubt that the Truman Cabinet, assessed impartially and on the individual merits of each member, was a better,

more aggressive and independent-minded group than any Cabinet which Roosevelt had assembled. At the same time, the old and familiar voices of militant liberalism had faded. The New Deal Administration was no longer, no matter how much some persons might like to make believe.

Truman did not attempt to be President and head of half a dozen different departments at the same time. Aware of his limitations, he delegated full responsibility to each member and pledged complete White House cooperation. This orderly process of fixing authority and exacting strict accountability at the highest policy levels produced efficiency and facilitated logical procedure in the consideration and solution of major problems. Truman insisted upon frank and open discussions at Cabinet meetings so that ultimate policy decisions could be indelibly registered upon the collective mind of the entire executive branch. The thirteen years of "personalized" government under Roosevelt had ended.

At the same time, Cabinet government under Truman accounted for many difficulties. Truman at first failed to realize that in the final analysis he alone must be responsible. Whereas Roosevelt had settled labor disputes himself, Truman left them to Secretary Schwollenbach. When Schwollenbach failed, the onus rested upon the President. When Byrnes acted without consulting Truman, the President bore the brunt of criticism for ensuing mistakes in foreign policy.

For a time, also, Truman experienced the difficulty of ordering a certain policy carried out only to have it scuttled lower down on the operational level by those out of sympathy with the proposed action. To counteract this deficiency, Truman worked out what was called the "Long Hard Look Department" devised largely by Special Counsel Clark Clifford. This provided for improved staff work and a double-checking system of subcommittee appraisal.

While Truman labored to prove himself as the nation's chief magistrate, he continued to carry along what generally were considered liabilities. Open disagreement would flare up in his official

family. Snyder often disagreed personally with Robert Hannegan. Hannegan thought and lived liberal politics. Snyder innately distrusted the left-wing organizations which Hannegan was cultivating.

The easily likable Major General Harry H. Vaughan, the President's military aide, could at times be sadly undiplomatic. An old friend and associate of Truman's, he had once addressed a church class in Alexandria, Virginia, following the Potsdam conference, and caused widespread embarrassment by his discussion of the meeting and the world personalities gathered there. He described Churchill as a "garrulous old gentleman" who never used less than ten words when two would suffice; he commented on the Russian military habit of shooting German civilians first and arguing afterwards, and their uninhibited seizure of properties and trading in the black market. He recounted the efforts of President Truman to keep the peace between Russia and Britain at the conference table, and—with singular forthrightness—remarked upon the blunt gruffness of Marshal Stalin.

It was General Vaughan who led Truman to invite Churchill to make the Fulton, Missouri, speech and to sit on the platform as a sort of token approval of what the former Prime Minister might say in addressing Vaughan's alma mater.

And then there were undignified moments for George Allen.

Allen had helped out during Truman's Vice-presidential campaign. When Truman became President, Allen went immediately to the White House and sought to make himself exceedingly useful as he helped with speeches, handled patronage appointments, and clashed with Hannegan over political matters. Allen usually made fun of himself, and in embarrassing or threatening crises he made the President laugh. He swam with the Chief Executive in the White House pool and told sidesplitting jokes, mostly at his own expense. Withal he was a loyal, lovable character, and, at least, a moderately able man. He had a wide acquaintance and was associated with some twenty business firms. Under Roosevelt, he had risen to be a commissioner of the District of Columbia. Under Truman, he became chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Cor-

poration, a position formerly occupied by Jesse Jones of Texas, former Secretary of Commerce. After serving briefly in the RFC, Allen retired and returned to private business. He had blazed like a mischievous comet. He had been an entertaining companion, but his comedy had been the kind of interlude an untried President could ill afford and might easily have foregone.

In 1944, the Kansas City, Missouri Congressional district next to Truman's own district had elected a politically ambitious Democrat, Roger C. Slaughter.

In an unprecedented honor for a newcomer, Slaughter was appointed to the powerful and reactionary Rules Committee of the House, the body which had claimed for itself the authority to decide which legislation the House would consider and which it would not. Only a majority of the House membership could disengage the strangle hold of this fourteen-member group which had fought almost every progressive bill for ten years. It was expected that Slaughter would be a liberal element on the committee. Instead, he instantly forgot any implied or explicit understanding and voted down the line to defeat the Truman program. This behavior prompted Truman, prior to the 1946 elections, to tell reporters baldly that "If Roger Slaughter's right, then I am wrong."

It amounted to a Presidential declaration of war and was so accepted. The President saw Jim Pendergast, head of the organization which had backed Slaughter. After their meeting, the machine switched its allegiance and supported Enos Axtell, a political newcomer acceptable to Truman. The defeat of Slaughter in the primary, the nomination of Axtell, and the final victory in the general election of Albert L. Reeves, a Republican from the district, only compounded the embarrassment of the administration in Washington.

The powerful newspaper the *Kansas City Star*, suspecting irregularities, started to look into the conduct of the primary election and reported widespread frauds in favor of Axtell's candidacy. This evidence was turned over to the Department of Justice by United States District Attorney Sam Wear, a Truman appointee. Thereupon, Attorney General Tom C. Clark ordered a

preliminary inquiry by the Federal Bureau of Investigation into the evidence unearthed by the *Kansas City Star*. When this was completed, Clark was advised that the probe only developed data affecting a few votes which would not have changed the election result. Meanwhile, three Federal judges in Kansas City, to whom the FBI evidence had been submitted, concluded that a conspiracy had not been disclosed and that further inquiry was unwarranted.

In Washington, Republican Senator James P. Kem of Missouri demanded further investigation, and the Republican Senate enthusiastically took up the issue. Here was an opportunity to pin the malodorous Pendergast political label squarely to the Truman administration masthead. Had not this same machine first brought Harry Truman to public office? Was Truman not still a dues-paying member of this organization? And had not Truman, as President, paroled a number of former Pendergast lieutenants?

Through days of hearings, the Republicans' ace investigator Senator Homer Ferguson of Michigan sought to establish first that the Truman administration had connived at fraud in the primary election, and, second, that Attorney General Clark, by circumscribing the scope of the FBI inquiry, had endeavored to cover up a conspiracy to defeat the will of the electorate.

The preliminary inquiry of the FBI, as Director J. Edgar Hoover testified, had been limited to examination of certain election officials and affidavits gathered by *Kansas City Star* reporters who had interviewed election judges, precinct watchers, and other officers, some 1,400 of them. When Republicans sought to make political capital of the limited nature of the FBI instructions from the Attorney General, Hoover insisted, by letter, that the directions were as comprehensive as those usually issued in such cases.

In the midst of these developments, and while Harry Truman visited in Grandview, Missouri, the Kansas City Federal Building was robbed and the challenged ballot boxes stolen. The hue and cry now reached a strident pitch. Wholesale indictments of Kansas City election officials and workers were brought by a county

grand jury. Clark belatedly ordered a new and full investigation directed by his special prosecuting assistant Richard K. Phelps. The Pendergast organization, Phelps said, had indeed "voted stiffs and ghosts," had stolen ballots, and had used all means available in rigging the primary election in order to beat Slaughter.

Back in the Senate, two members, Republican William Langer of North Dakota, a lone wolf in his party, and Democratic Senator Patrick McCarran of Nevada combined to prevent, as being unjustified, any further Senate inquiry. Ferguson, however, fought on. To force a full-scale investigation on the last night of the first session of the Eightieth Congress, Republican Owen Brewster of Maine filibustered against Truman's nomination of Philip Pearlman for the long vacant post of United States Solicitor General. The filibuster failed, Pearlman was confirmed, and further Senate investigation of the Kansas City election was prevented.

It was a sorry procedure on both sides. It had been sorry when Congressman Slaughter had achieved influence, power, and publicity by his strategic and unrelenting crusade against Truman's liberal program. It had been sorry when Truman talked over with Jim Pendergast the prospect of beating Slaughter. It had been despicable when the ballots had been stolen, and a thorough inquiry defeated.

The Republicans, for their part, had prosecuted rather than conducted a factual investigation. They had seized upon Hoover's early testimony that the inquiry was abbreviated, to charge connivance, and when he had insisted that the customary procedure was followed, they declined to accept his conclusions. They sought to filibuster through an investigation as the price for the confirmation of the Solicitor General.

During the Eightieth Congress, for political reasons, Republicans declined to approve the nomination of some 650 of 900 postmasters appointed by Truman. They decided instead to determine why more Republicans were not named. Through Senator Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, they questioned the appointment of Democratic Federal judges solely on political grounds. Arthur H. Vandenberg of Michigan,

foreign policy leader of the party, blocked the President's nomination of former Attorney General Biddle to serve on the United Nations Economic Commission. Vandenberg considered Biddle too, "New Dealish" and too prone to make commitments. Truman was forced to withdraw the Biddle nomination.

For Solicitor General the political finagling was so flagrant that Republican attorneys and jurists from Maryland, the home state of the nominee, violently protested. When Howard McGrath of Rhode Island, the man named later to succeed Hannegan as chairman of the Democratic National Committee, protested that Pearlman's every constitutional right and honor had been prostituted in the conduct of hearings on the nomination, no rebuttal was offered.

The Kansas City election was a scandal. That it did not touch Harry Truman personally could not deter the opposition from attempting to attribute it to his administration. The Pauley appointment had been unfortunate and ill advised, showing the President at his weakest.

The administration had been singed by internal political fires, a fact concealed only with reasonable success. What could not be hidden were the open blunders.

These were to be compounded as the political lines tightened in 1948.

Hannegan's resignation as Democratic National Chairman caused the President to make a personal choice of a successor by picking the young, aggressive, and liberal Senator J. Howard McGrath of Rhode Island. McGrath had been Governor and former Solicitor General of the United States. He was a hard-driving Democrat schooled in politics from ward bell ringer up to the top. Things began to hum around headquarters. McGrath tore up speeches written for him and wrote his own in fighting language. He worked overtime to bring the party over to the offensive. He sought to salve over sore spots, heal local quarrels which had broken out carbuncle-fashion in the party, and to infuse a new life into the comatose party cells.

It became increasingly evident, however, that the Truman ad-



ministration was not soundly moored. If some fair days were ahead, there were also heavy storms in the offing. The men around the President could not be characterized as of adequate caliber to guide a sorely harassed man through the attacks of a national campaign. The curse of every administration, the White House Janissariat, became marked in Truman's case.

This group drew itself tighter around the President as the campaign neared. Democrats in Congress complained privately that the President was being insulated from some much-needed and hardheaded political counsel. The President was getting his protection and advice from men who, though of good will, were not competent for the task.

The Cabinet itself had begun to dim. Even Secretary Marshall, for all of his great character and quality, had begun to speak with less prestige and effect than he had once enjoyed. True, both Democrats and Republicans in Congress had applauded him heartily while remaining coldly indifferent to President Truman when the latter came to deliver his "State of the Union" address in 1948. But Marshall's word was no longer law. It was questioned—vigorously and often.

The constriction of the White House, the indifference of Congress toward the President, the questioning of Marshall's great stature, the movement of the Republican party to a vigorous offensive, and a creeping tendency of the administration toward mistakes began to manifest themselves. The administration was taking one jolt after another. Even more serious ones were coming.

Henry A. Wallace, still smarting from the manner in which Truman had removed him from the Cabinet, struck out to run for President as an independent, third-party candidate. The Communists, the disgruntled, and the "lunatic fringe," which asserts itself quadrennially in elections, flocked to his banner. If Wallace's campaign had not the slightest chance of winning but a good prospect of defeating Harry Truman and his anti-Soviet policies, the former Vice-president was heavenly manna to these elements. True, Wallace was not a Communist. But he fraternized with them, he suited their purposes, and he was a good campaigner.

Wallace was equally welcome to the Republican party. His candidacy, they believed, just about wrote *finis* to Harry Truman and the Democrats in such key states as New York, California, Illinois, and Pennsylvania, where the vote might be close and the radical elements, voting for Wallace, could deprive the Democrats of victory. For their part, Democrats talked forlornly of Henry Wallace. They wished and even wagered that before election day, Wallace would find cause to lay down his crusade for "peace and security" and return to the fold, bringing his rag, tag, and bobtail assortment of radical voters along with him. Early in the campaign, he gave the Democrats a paralyzing scare. In New York's 24th Congressional District, one admirably suited to Wallace's campaign purposes, Wallace had carried his left-wing American Labor Party candidate, Leo Isacson, to a decisive victory. The vote was light, only 40 per cent of normal, but the left-wing ticket rolled up more votes than the combined Democrats, Republicans, and American Liberals. Negroes, said Northern Democrats, voted against the Democratic candidate because of the racialism of Southern party members. Jews, enraged by the administration embargo on arms shipments to Palestine, voted heavily against the Democratic party.

This by-election seemed to demonstrate to the Democrats that Henry Wallace could be dynamite. For party sleeping sickness to break out in a tight Democratic hierarchy like the Bronx, where Boss Ed Flynn had long ruled with iron control, was unnerving.

The President himself fumbled badly at the political helm.

He summarily, and without explanation, demoted a recognized liberal, Marriner Eccles, from the chairmanship of the Federal Reserve Board, though he persuaded him to remain on the board itself. Eccles was replaced by a Republican, Thomas McCabe of Philadelphia, former head of the Foreign Liquidation of surplus war supplies. Eccles had conferred at intervals with Senator Taft, the high apostle of conservative Republicanism and Truman's number one senatorial peeve. Eccles had also opposed Truman's inflation control program as a concoction of nostrums and proposed a stronger medicine than controls. Eccles advocated striking di-

rectly at inflation by tightening credit and constricting the \$28,000,000,000 supply of money in circulation.

If liberal Democrats who had admired Eccles were disturbed by this action, the conservatives had theirs coming, too.

As a Senator, Truman had staunchly stood and voted for civil-rights legislation. He fought prejudices, Jim Crowism, lynching, deprivation of the ballot because of color and lack of a poll-tax receipt. His family had sided with the Confederacy during the Civil War, but Truman had long opposed the bigotry, intolerance, and demagoguery of the "professional Southerner" who traded in white supremacy, klanism, terrorism, and fiery crosses. He had repeatedly asked Congress to enact civil-rights legislation.

Accordingly, he renewed his demand in 1948. He did not mince words. His message was blunt and direct. In 1947, he had appointed a special commission to study the whole problem of racial rights.

"We have had human slavery. We have had religious persecution. We have had mob rule," this commission reported. "We still have their ideological remnants in the unwarrantable 'pride and prejudice' of some of our people and practices. . . . We have learned much that has shocked us and much that has made us feel ashamed. . . ."

Harry Truman literally ripped entire passages out of the commission report for the message he fired at Congress. "Throughout our history men and women of all colors and creeds, of all races and religions, have come to this country to escape tyranny and discrimination," he said. "Millions strong, they have helped build this democratic Nation and have constantly reinforced our devotion to the great ideals of liberty and equality."

To what were they entitled in return? Truman laid down his program. He wanted a joint Congressional committee, a permanent commission, and a Division of Civil Rights in the Department of Justice; antilynching legislation; an end to poll taxes; a Fair Employment Practices Commission; an end to Jim Crowism on railroads and busses; and equal naturalization rights.

That Truman had gone so far was—from the standpoint of prac-

tical politics—dangerous in the extreme. He had stung the South, the backbone of the Democratic party, to its depths. The political woes of the Democrats were compounded by the fission the President's message threatened to produce. Southern governors, almost to a man, began organizing for a revolt within the party. Some of the reactionaries among Southern Congressmen talked of organizing to defeat Harry Truman in the election. Others cried that he was trying to "out-Wallace Henry Wallace."

Truman had irritated the liberals. He had enraged the South. Henry Wallace threatened him on the left and the South from the right.

The public opinion polls were ominous. They showed Truman trailing every possible Republican candidate except Taft.

The President could look back with a glow of satisfaction on only one development in early 1948. So could most of the Republican hopefuls. General Dwight Eisenhower, who was rolling up popular fancy at a tremendous pitch, withdrew from politics with finality. He, even most Democrats admitted, could have beaten Truman hands down, once he had the nomination. Masters of the Republican party did not like him. They admitted that in a deadlocked convention, the delegations might stampede like moths to the gilt and glitter of the General.

Democrats and Old Guard Republicans alike breathed easier.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### "MR. MISSOURI"

**T**HERE ARE THOSE who expect the President of the United States to be a man of infinite wisdom. He must possess a supreme degree of self-confidence, a willingness to gamble magnificently on his own judgment, and the disposition to wrestle with any problem. For good measure, he should also possess a flair for showmanship.

President Roosevelt did not normally wear a patched suit in the White House office, but no one raised a point of decorum when he visited dust-bowl farmers with his elbows frayed. Harry Truman in his farming days wore patched clothes many times, but if he had tried as President to wear a coat mended at the sleeves, it would have been a matter of instant note, perchance public disesteem. If some men can "get by" with many things, it may fairly be said of Harry Truman that he is so modest and unaffected that he could not "get away" with anything.

Truman, as he had reiterated so often, reluctantly gave up the free, unassuming camaraderie of the United States Senate to take on the crushing White House burden of responsibilities. He was a plain man and wanted more than anything else to continue to be a plain man. But Fate, as had so often happened in his career, decreed otherwise. In Missouri he strived to be tax collector only to become a United States Senator. Thereupon he wanted to continue as Senator, and graduated into the Vice-presidency. He prayed that he would remain as the Vice-president, and was elevated to the Presidency. He hoped to enjoy a peaceful administration, and found himself projected as a world leader in the most decisive period of all history.

Harry Truman's simple humanity at once endeared him to the American people, and at the same time led him into some of his most serious mistakes. For a while it seemed to lend a sort of

comic-opera flavor to his administration, amusing and typically American, perhaps.

President or not, Harry Truman during his first months in office had determined to remain his natural, gregarious self. He deeply regretted that he was cut off from friends and associates of long standing. He chafed at the exaggerated attention and publicity accorded him, with his every word and action subjected to endless public psychoanalysis in the press.

There was no lack of sincerity in his determination to be "a good and faithful servant of my Lord and my people," as he had supplicated. The deficiency lay in the lack of dignity, and a clear appreciation of the position he occupied.

When strikes were literally splitting the economy of the country, the President had embarked upon his trip to the Caruthersville, Missouri, County Fair. Perhaps he felt that nothing could be more calculated to induce confidence and serenity in the American people than the sight of their President, an ordinary Missourian, tooting the tin whistle on an old American Legion "40-and-8" locomotive, swigging soda pop in the grandstand, and spitting, as custom prescribed, into the Mississippi River at dawn. It was a gala occasion. The President reveled and relaxed, shook hands with old friends, watched the local dancers, and did almost everything but judge the prize pumpkin at the vegetable stand. Harry Truman was among the people whom he loved and understood best. Yet it was hard to imagine a scene more incongruous with the Presidency.

Later, when visiting Jefferson Island, Maryland, for an old-fashioned rally with Congressional Democrats, the President again made no pretense for grandeur. He drank his bourbon whisky and branch water in modest quantities, and sat on the front porch of a cottage playing stud poker. This ingenuous "hominess" had a resounding effect. It led more politically squeamish advisers to protest, and brought a complaint from within the President's own Baptist Church.

At the beginning of his administration, Truman's former Missouri colleague, Bennett Champ Clark, a widower, was married.

Regardless of past political differences, the President had appointed Clark to the Federal bench. In spite of all contrary advice, he now decided to serve as Clark's best man. It was Harry Truman standing up for Bennett Clark, not the President of the United States participating in the wedding of a Federal judge. Truman's friends winced. Fortunately the incident was soon forgotten.

These things were disconcerting, and may have contributed to Harry Truman's difficulties. Yet they also revealed a rare warmth of personality which excited the admiration of the American people.

President Truman joined the organization for the "maintenance of barbershop quartets." In Kansas City he visited the old haberdashery store in which he had once gone bankrupt with Eddie Jacobson, and bought a half-dozen shirts. He wore an unorthodox striped bow tie with his dinner jacket and started an etiquette argument that occupied the nation's front pages for days.

He insisted upon shaving himself, wore a rash of new suits and bold-patterned neckties. He telephoned Senators' offices unconcernedly and unannounced, as if he were still a member of Congress. Like most men, he still enjoyed off-color jokes, and exchanged them with reporters and cronies. He dropped in without warning upon dinner and birthday parties given for old companions as though he were still a Jackson County Judge in Missouri. When attending the review of his World War I 35th Army Division in Kansas City in the summer of 1947, he came as a doughboy. Bareheaded and perspiring in the sweltering weather, he abandoned the White House limousine and tramped unabashed and steaming up the avenue. Kansas City loved him for it. So did America.

He accepted a prize bull, Alabam, as a present, given to him on the White House lawn. When the animal aimed a vicious kick at the presidential shin, Truman sidestepped adroitly, and laughed at the incident, which had set Secret Service men on edge. After all, as a Missouri dirt farmer, his leg had once been broken in just such an unguarded moment.

The President laughed heartily when a group of close friends

and associates helped celebrate his birthday, and presented him with a wild-eyed, rampant alley cat concealed in an imitation cardboard layer cake.

While the President insisted upon leading his own life, he also resolved that his wife Bess and his daughter Margaret should continue to live as they desired. Mrs. Truman was gracious, wholesome, unaffected, and thus hardly newsworthy. She never went down into a mine, or turned up with social philosophies, nor did she serve as a political pulse-taker for her husband. She just lived the First Lady's role as a wife and a mother.

Margaret Truman, an attractive young woman of twenty-three, continued her singing studies, kept up her friendships with girls of her own age, and defied all attempts to build around her a White House romance, real or fancied. She succeeded in living normally, unspoiled by the fame that had come to her father.

In the spring of 1947, Margaret, after years of training, tested out the public reception of her voice. Admittedly, said the critics, she had a good voice; though one not destined to be great.

In time the Truman family worked out acceptable arrangements with the press. The First Lady and her daughter received the women reporters and permitted some degree of publicity. But there was no plethora of social news such as had marked the Roosevelts' years in office. The Trumans maintained their private family life in spite of social and official duties at the Executive Mansion.

The President himself, after the ill-advised jaunt to Caruthersville, turned a new page. He cultivated a new dignity, and tried harder to live as President, avoiding disconcerting and disturbing contacts.

In spite of political and diplomatic worries, he had stood his job well. He became impressed most of all with the sheer endlessness of his duties. He never seemed to catch up. But his step still had bounce and spring, his skin was clear and healthy, and his eyes shone brightly behind the thick-lensed spectacles. He even gained weight.

Undoubtedly the secret of the President's good health stemmed



from a heritage of longevity, the ability to avoid worry, to disconnect his thinking apparatus when ready to relax, and to regular and moderate living habits.

As President he adhered to his strict daily regimen. Invariably he goes to bed at eleven and rises at six, shaves, bathes, and then drinks a tall glass of very warm water. Until about seven, he glances at the daily newspapers before taking his constitutional.

You can see him, with Secret Service men keeping step, marching along the sidewalks of Washington in the early morning. He relishes these walks and they provide a strong link with the ordinary workaday world. He chuckles when he passes unrecognized by other pedestrians on the capital streets.

Walking remains his only real exercise. He swims fairly often in the White House pool but seldom uses the special bowling alleys presented by well-wishers, or the weights and gadgets which his physician recommended. Occasionally he pitches horseshoes, since this diversion has provided a competitive interest.

At breakfast with Mrs. Truman, the President customarily has a glass of milk, two slices of whole-wheat toast and a small bowl of hot oatmeal. He always has been an exceedingly light eater, often merely picking at his food. His tendency to put on weight can be attributed to the fact that at the many official dinners and banquets he eats more than he requires out of politeness. He does not eat snacks between meals and never touches sweets.

After breakfast, the President goes to his office, arriving almost on the dot of eight-twenty to dictate letters and discuss policy with his Chief of Staff, Admiral Leahy. By 9 A.M. it is time to confer with the White House secretariat. Work in progress is reviewed and the day's schedule laid out. Thereafter, the President runs through a steady series of fifteen-minute appointments until lunchtime. After a light meal and a half-hour nap, he is ready for the heavier afternoon meetings.

In the late afternoon, the President enjoys a swim or a light workout in the White House gymnasium, followed by a shower and rubdown. Dinner with the family is served at seven; then the President repairs to his study and works until bedtime. He cus-

tomarily works also on Sundays and rarely finds time to enjoy the relaxation of playing the piano. He seldom attends private White House movies. He is not particularly fond of films and, moreover, they place an additional strain on his weak eyes.

On weekends he loves to cruise down the Potomac River and on Chesapeake Bay on the Presidential yacht *Williamsburg*. To avoid jealousies within the administration, he usually invites only members of the immediate White House staff to accompany him. These excursions are informal, and guests are asked to dress accordingly. Truman likes to lounge and nap on the sun deck or stroll around the ship. However, a stack of top-level documents and reports occupies his attention, and there is always close communication from Washington by radio telephone.

As Chief Executive, Truman can never be free of worry entirely, but he possesses the rare ability of tackling each task as it comes along and then dismissing it from his mind. When he prepared his address on the Greek-Turkish aid program, he reviewed the draft at length, made some corrections and, when he was satisfied with it, snapped shut the black leather loose-leaf notebook. He did not refer to the speech again until he faced Congress on the next day.

As President, at sixty-five, Harry Truman has managed to get his quota of rest, to sleep soundly at night, and maintain good digestion and enviable equanimity for a man who has experienced so many ups and downs. In fact, his physician, Dr. Wallace Graham, pronounced the President as fit as a man twenty years younger. To those around him who inquire after his health, he says, "I'm fine; you know, I never get sick." He felt, he once said, just about as old as when he had come to the Senate in 1935.

The Trumans became adjusted to the role of the nation's First Family. Mrs. Truman had developed into a homelike and charming First Lady. The President's daughter had earned a high regard by being herself. The President had made mistakes of judgment, though rarely of the heart.

He would continue to visit with old friends, and drop in at the Walter Reed Hospital or Bethesda Naval Hospital chapels for

Sunday worship with sick and wounded servicemen. When in Grandview, Missouri, he would probably again have lunch in the home-town restaurant, and leave a dollar tip for the waitress who served him.

His devotion to his aged mother was something of which America affectionately approved. On becoming President, he had sent his personal plane to Kansas City, and the redoubtable old lady was flown back to the capital for her only visit to the White House. She was then past ninety, and when the plane landed at the Washington airport she looked sternly and irritably at the gathering of dignitaries and news cameras on hand to record her arrival. She turned to her son and exploded, "Oh, fiddlesticks!"

The President deeply relished his mother's disdain of the trappings of high position. Her character was that of an indomitable pioneer woman; she was opinionated, blunt, and strong-minded. She was, whatever might happen to her son, Martha Truman of Grandview, Missouri.

She had fallen and broken her hip in the spring of 1947. At the President's direction she was given every care that medical science could provide. Cynicism being easy and cheap beyond words, there were those who, when the President went to the farm and insisted upon staying near her, read into his action a political motive. But the people at large judged it for what it was—the natural filial urge to be with his aged mother in her last days.

The Congress was in session and there were problems to be faced. The President set up temporary working quarters and attended to his duties, but he insisted upon spending every possible moment with his failing mother. She rallied amazingly, and he returned to Washington. When she suddenly grew worse, he flew back to her bedside. He was hours late. He had delayed his departure in order to sign an important bill. She had passed away when he reached Grandview.

It was typical of Harry Truman and his family that they kept the funeral services simple and private. The President wished no photographs, and the newspapers respected his desire. Back in Washington, he called the reporters and photographers into his

office and thanked them for the consideration they had shown his family in their sorrow.

Truman's humanity had impressed itself indelibly upon the people. He had, at times, perhaps lived beneath his role as President; but surely he had never tried to live beyond Harry Truman.

There had been discomforts and tribulation, but the Trumans, under the peculiar influence which the White House exerted, grew unmistakably into their position and had come to like it. The American people might not be enamored of the Truman family; that was still undetermined. But they undoubtedly respected them.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### "FLYING PRESIDENT"

PRESIDENT TRUMAN travels easily. He prefers to fly, although Mrs. Truman dislikes air travel and objects considerably to her husband's preference. His personal pilot, a veteran of great skill, picks the most acceptable routes and sometimes travels considerable distances to skirt storms which might shake up the air-borne White House.

The President's friends have remonstrated with him that he takes undue risks. On Christmas Day, 1946, despite inclement weather, Truman insisted upon flying to Grandview, Missouri, to spend the holiday with his mother. The day was cold, icy, and snow blew in such gusts that it was questionable that the landing could be made safely. This somewhat reckless episode resulted in public criticism that emphasized upon Harry Truman the importance of the Presidency, regardless of his personal inclinations. Nevertheless, he takes a fatalistic attitude, believing that when his number is called, his time will be up, whether he is flying, traveling by railroad, or sleeping.

Truman objected to the sobriquet *Sacred Cow* attached to the four-motored C-54 transport which he inherited with his office. When the new DC-6, a larger, more spacious, and better appointed airplane, was made ready for his use, he promptly named it the *Independence*, after his home town in Missouri.

While Americans may not like too many of such homespun qualities in their President, they derive no end of pride in a Chief Executive who can travel to foreign countries and captivate a people by a demonstration of friendship.

International considerations dictated that this role of good-will messenger be played. But Harry Truman was no actor. He lacked entirely the grand manner. He was not even a good radio speaker,

and compared to Roosevelt, his flat, slightly nasal speech sometimes sounded lamentable.

Yet, at the same time, it was his very modesty and unassuming nature that contributed so much to Truman's stature after he had become accustomed to his high office; when he had finally learned to be President, and remain human at the same time. Certainly, these qualities combined to make him into one of the best ambassadors of good will the United States ever had in the Western Hemisphere.

In March of 1947, at the invitation of President Miguel Alemán, he visited Mexico City. There, to the surprise of himself and the elation of his official party, the President proceeded from one triumph to another. The entire city had turned out to greet him. Truman's homely waving to the crowds and his easy winning smile set a tone to the welcome that made his entire stay in the Mexican capital an unalloyed success.

In delivering a little speech, he stumbled over his pronunciations, grinned good-humoredly, and won affection by that very weakness. Because he wanted to show his respect for Mexico and its most cherished traditions, he drove without ostentation to the ancient Chapultepec castle. Alighting from his limousine, the President slowly walked up to the great monument erected to the memory of "Los Niños Héroes" and there laid down a wreath. In 1847, an exact century before, United States troops had stormed the castle. According to legend, six cadets—sole survivors of the corps of teen-age defenders—took their own lives rather than surrender. Five had stabbed themselves. The sixth wrapped himself in the Mexican flag and jumped to his death on the rocks far beneath the parapet.

Harry Truman could have done nothing more deeply symbolic of true friendship. His gesture touched Mexico to the heart. Taxi drivers wept when reciting the incident. Officials observed that a century of misunderstanding and bitterness had been wiped away by the generous act of the American President. Tears had welled in the eyes of the blue-uniformed cadets from the National Military Academy of Mexico as the President deposited his wreath

and bowed before the simple, plain shaft. When a Mexican reporter the next day asked the President what had prompted this noble gesture, Truman replied feelingly, "I know the history of this incident. Brave men do not belong to any one country. I respect bravery wherever I see it. I thought they ought to have a wreath."

The Mexicans also admired Truman's vigor and the astonishing gusto with which he sped, apparently without tiring, through three days of sight seeing and diplomatic receptions. He flew over the great volcano Parícutín and recited a moral lesson from what he had seen.

"I was struck by the awful condition it left those people in," he said of the peons who had lived on the now devastated countryside. "It is a terrible thing when nature breaks out on humans, but when humans break out on humans it is even worse. That's what your President and I have been trying to prevent—for the sake of world peace."

Truman thoroughly enjoyed the huge *fiesta* of games and dances given by the Mexican schoolchildren in the National Stadium, a spectacle that drew such a crush of enthusiasts that two persons were suffocated in the sweltering crowd. He drove to Quetzalcoatl temple, and the Pyramid of the Sun outside the city. He autographed cards for scores of Mexicans with laughing good grace, and before leaving he took occasion to remind members of the American colony that each, in a great measure, was an ambassador of American good will.

Truman's next trip was to Canada, as the guest of Prime Minister Mackenzie King and the Governor General, Viscount Alexander. The President's warm, personal touch was again felt everywhere he went. His address to the Canadian Parliament, as members said, lent a tone of friendship and warm relations which had been missing for years. Perhaps he sounded his high note at a parliamentary luncheon when he delivered a short impromptu speech in his artless way.

"I have heard of people receiving three cheers and a tiger but it never happened to me before," he said simply, referring to the

greeting Parliament had accorded him. "I have seen pictures of rulers waving to their cheering people from balconies covered with rugs. I had some experience of that in Mexico. I have heard of people walking on a red carpet, but I never did that until I came here."

Then, lifting his glass high, "I want to propose a toast to the Parliament of Canada."

Truman's prepared address to the Parliament was a sound, strongly worded statement, constituting a pledge that Canada and the United States would ever stand together as steadfast neighbors.

"Canada's notable achievement of national unity and progress through accommodation, moderation and forbearance can be studied with profit by her sister nations," Truman said, after alluding to the Dominion's varied racial strains. "Much the same qualities have been employed, with like success, in your relations with the United States. Perhaps I should say your 'foreign relations with the United States.' But the word 'foreign' seems strangely out of place. Canada and the United States have reached the point where we no longer think of each other as 'foreign' countries. We think of each other as friends, as peaceful and cooperative neighbors on a spacious and fruitful continent. . . .

"We intend to cooperate actively and loyally with all who honestly seek, as we do, to build a better world in which mankind can live in peace and prosperity.

"We count Canada in the forefront of those who share these objectives and ideals.

"With such friends, we face the future unafraid."

Democratic politicians had urged the President, immediately after the recess of the Eightieth Congress, to board a train and start on a national handshaking tour around the country, "Just to show yourself to the people." With the infallible intuition of politics, they knew that Truman's real force lay in his friendliness, the ability he had to go out and shake hands with somebody just for the sheer delight of making a new friend and finding out what he was thinking. Harry Truman on the lecture platform was



miscast. In front of a microphone, on a nation-wide hook-up, he was not effective. But put him to rubbing elbows with the people—any people—shaking hands, and ad-libbing his lines, and he was a man to be reckoned with.

He could speak no foreign language, yet he touched the chords of a deeper language in his personal contacts. But Democratic party members were saying that Harry Truman would get no votes in Ottawa or Mexico City; so why in the name of common sense, did he not apply his technique to the forty-eight states?

On this score, Truman was undoubtedly wary of pitfalls. It became evident that he had set his sights for a second, and self-earned term in the White House. He had come to like the job. In the summer, Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York had essayed just such a transcontinental tour as was being urged upon Truman. The trip by most accounts had backfired upon the 1944 Republican presidential nominee. It had provided many embarrassing moments and brought into focus the sharp delineation of sectional politics. Then, another Republican contender, Senator Taft of Ohio, had made his own soundings of the nation in a swing to the West Coast. The results hardly constituted what a presidential candidate would hope to achieve. Taft's conflicts with the unyielding philosophies of organized labor were sharpened by the tour. His unabashed pronouncements on prices and other controversial subjects, while they may have excited admiration for their forthrightness, did not brighten his political prospects.

Instead of boarding a train for a swing around the country, the President determined to visit Brazil after the inter-American conference on mutual defense. It was a hazardous flight over unmapped jungles. His plane, equipped with every lifesaving and protective device which foresight could dictate, made the flight uneventfully and landed Truman in Rio de Janeiro, where he was greeted by a million people.

He loved his drive, accompanied by Mrs. Truman and his daughter, through the 6 miles of avenues lined with cheering people. He had been twenty-eight hours in the air, yet he acted

as if he had just stepped outside the White House to its spacious lawn, or as if he were rocking on the front porch at home at Grandview.

The Brazilians affectionately nicknamed him "Mr. Missouri," and many turned out early to see the President on his morning strolls. The routine which Truman ran through in Brazil was staggering. The pace kept his entourage puffing. He addressed the closing session of the Hemisphere conference in friendly, reassuring terms. He hunted orchids on the mountainside. When his automobile skidded perilously close to the rim of a mountain cliff, he dismissed the incident by saying that he had often had equally narrow "calls" on Missouri's muddy roads. He attended and gave receptions, acted as host at diplomatic dinners, and as guest of honor. He was greatly pleased that the Brazilians had issued a special stamp in his honor. He tramped about in the rain, like any ordinary citizen. He reviewed military parades, and went unannounced to the opera, where he received an ovation. He liked the city so much in fact that he told Brazilian President Eurico Gaspar Dutra, that "I am tempted to come and run for mayor of Rio de Janeiro, and I think I could be elected."

His address to the conference was statesmanlike and most gratifying to the representatives of every nation. "This Western Hemisphere of ours is usually referred to as the New World," Truman had said. "That it is the New World is clearer today than ever before. The Old World is exhausted, its civilization imperiled. Its people are suffering. They are confused and filled with fears for the future. Their hope must lie in this new world of ours.

"The sick and the hungry cannot build a peaceful world. They must have the support of the strong and the free. . . . The United States seeks world peace, a peace of free men. I know that you stand with us. United, we can constitute the greatest single force in the world for the good of humanity."

Truman left no doubt that the United States intended to defend the Western Hemisphere with all its might. He held out the strong hand of friendship and help and asked only that the sentiment be reciprocated.

He expressed the same feeling in his address to the Brazilian Congress.

"When both our countries were attacked, our people fought side by side until victory was attained," Truman said in a heart-warming reminder to the Brazilians that their military services on the Italian front were not unremembered. "The bravery of your fighting men, against an experienced and resourceful enemy, cemented our comradeship and gave us another reason to feel a deep sense of pride in our friendship.

"I am here to say we are not a people who forget our friends when they are friends in need.

"The memory of those days of struggle and sacrifice together will always be a sacred bond between us. . . ."

"You have moved the soul of Brazil," said the Foreign Minister, Raul Fernandes. "The feeling you saw was a display of complete spontaneity and represents the place you have won in the hearts of the Brazilian people."

That the Brazilians, as had the Mexicans and Canadians, responded so spontaneously was beyond doubt due to the open-hearted manner in which their guest, the President of the United States, but more importantly "Mr. Missouri," had come and mingled among them.

If "Mr. Missouri" did not have the undivided political support of his own country, he certainly had registered well with other Western Hemisphere nations. Harry Truman had established himself as an agent of good will with few equals. Turned loose, left alone, given his head, and allowed to follow his plain friendly instincts, Harry Truman was a power with other peoples, even with his opponents. What the country had missed in a Presidential handshaking tour, the nation had certainly gained in prestige abroad.

Here was a real gain and substantial insurance for the American people.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### EVALUATION

**J**UST AS two men of diverse temperament and ideas may react differently in identical situations, so public officers, given similar problems and the selfsame machinery with which to solve them, may well arrive at quite divergent governmental decisions. History, for all of theory, is in a large measure personal.

The Presidency of the United States sometimes calls forth a high expression of strong individualism, as exemplified by Washington, Jackson, Lincoln, and the two Roosevelts. On the other hand, many men of ordinary stature have occupied the office; men who neither by training nor ability appeared to be the best fitted to cope with the complex duties of the White House.

Only a scant half dozen of the thirty-two American Presidents have established their administrations as historical landmarks, or earned a measure of greatness by the vigor and resolution with which they seized upon the problems of their day.

The White House, however, has always been an institution adapted to further the growth of the incumbent President. Its atmosphere is one of assurance and dignity, commanding the entire panorama of government. Moreover, by Constitutional provision, the White House embodies enormous stability. Had the English parliamentary system prevailed in the United States in November, 1946, a Republican would have moved in as Chief Executive at a most critical period. He would necessarily have been comparatively uninformed and probably would have lacked experience to a greater degree than Vice-president Truman when he inherited the Presidency.

White House immunity to political storms thus tends to maintain a balance while at the same time reminding the incumbent of the need for more decisive action and leadership on his part. The people, however, are later given the quadrennial opportunity

to enforce orderly replacement of both their President and Congressional representatives in joint elections.

Then, too, government in the United States has reached a degree of complexity and magnitude that makes it reasonably debatable whether the Presidency has not become too big for any single man to manage and direct. The growth of government has tended to swallow up Presidents in its vast machinery and to make them, as Harry Truman has complained, virtual prisoners in a mansion.

Those who have gained stature above the average level of Presidents possessed certain qualities which Truman, seemingly, singularly lacks: the ability to make of government a dramatic thing through the emotional appeal that reaches out into men's hearts. The dash and defiance of Jackson, the deep stirrings of Abraham Lincoln, and the tremendous modern-day dramatization which Franklin D. Roosevelt projected through the radio to every fireside—these things Harry Truman could not even attempt to equal.

When Senator William E. Borah of Idaho was leading the fight against Franklin Roosevelt's foreign policies, he once remarked that he never listened to the President's speeches. To listen, he warned, was to be charmed to such a degree that one failed to weigh dispassionately the import of the words. Borah would silence the radio when Roosevelt came on the air, waiting for the next day to study the actual text of the President's arguments.

Similarly, Senator Borah might have declined to read the words of the poetic Lincoln. But in any case, it is unlikely that he would have hesitated to hear or read the remarks of President Harry S. Truman.

Truman undoubtedly suffered political disability because Fate had chosen him to follow Franklin Roosevelt and his masterly hand. The comparison, invidious as it might be, was bound to be made.

Nevertheless, President Truman is destined to importance in history, if not by virtue of himself, then by the inexorable march of world events with which his name will irrevocably be associated. He was not only called upon to guide the nation to victory through the final phases of the most devastating war in

history; he presided at the advent of the atomic age and he was to struggle to shape the destiny of world peace—a task that might well prove more arduous, in many ways, than war itself.

Essentially, but on an infinitely larger scale, the nation was facing the same problems that taxed statesmanship in the years following the Civil War and World War I, with this enormous difference: that today the problem of domestic readjustment had superimposed on it the far heavier burden of restoration of world economy.

It cannot be said that Truman was altogether ill prepared for this most difficult of all assignments. He had served eleven years in the United States Senate, dealing with government bureaus and their problems, and had come to know them fairly intimately. He had conducted the famous wartime investigations which had hoisted him into the Vice-presidency. He had worked hard and learned a great deal. Abraham Lincoln had served only one term as Congressman, having been a small-town lawyer before entering the White House. Andrew Jackson had been a rough-and-tumble border general before his election. Franklin Roosevelt's apprenticeship in national government was as Assistant Secretary of the Navy during World War I and thereafter for twelve years, prior to becoming President, as a New York State politician and governor.

Roosevelt himself had recognized Truman's qualities, his governmental training, his liberal record and political instincts; and for these reasons, had called for him as his running mate. President Roosevelt, moreover, had not made his decision without canvassing the entire field of possible nominees, though he had diluted his approval with the statement that if he were a delegate to the convention he would personally vote for Henry Wallace. The convention itself had felt satisfied that in Truman they had chosen a man qualified to carry on if anything should happen to the President.

Yet it can fairly be said that Harry Truman, elevated to the nation's highest office, moved many of the very weaknesses and faults of the American people into the White House, where, traditionally, the people least expected them. It was one thing to give a

warm welcome to a farmer from South Dakota fresh out of his blue jeans, and quite another to have a bizarre parade of old cronies, well-wishers, lodge brothers, and political straphangers tramping through the executive offices and commanding attention which could better have been devoted to the nation's problems. Happily, the parade ended. It was all very well to keep a clean desk, as Truman had at first sought to do. Each morning, as typed chits on top-policy matters were brought to him, he would run through them with amazing rapidity, scribbling longhand directions and orders. This rough-and-ready method inevitably led to errors.

At times, in his three years in office, Truman had reacted in a spirit of impatience, if not petulance, to problems and situations which perhaps he did not fully comprehend, thereby ordering action on the basis of emotion rather than reason. Harried as he was by almost every conceivable kind of emergency, this was perhaps understandable if not excusable.

However, this tendency contributed greatly to the feeling expressed by some that excepting perhaps Herbert Hoover in 1932, no candidate entered an election year with his political stock so low as Harry Truman's in the spring of 1948. Indeed, he had slipped badly.

The question was, would Harry Truman be able to pull himself up once more as he had done so often before? The coalition of minorities which Roosevelt had held together in the Democratic party was splintered. The city machines which had helped Roosevelt carry important states—Kelly-Nash in Chicago, Hague in Jersey City, Flynn in New York, and Pendergast in Kansas City—were in low estate, as Wallace demonstrated in beating the Democrats in Flynn's own district. The revolt of the South was serious enough, but in the early spring of 1948 it looked as if even this was not needed to beat Harry Truman.

Henry Wallace might conceivably cost the Democrats New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and California. The Jewish vote apparently was lost as a result of the muddled handling of the Palestine issue. Truman had antagonized the South needlessly by press-

ing the civil rights issue at the wrong moment. Democrats speculated that minority and pressure groups had found in the White House circle around Truman some means by which they could sway him to the support of their separate programs. It seemed to some members of his own party that every week Truman made a new effort to stop Wallace and the Republicans by embracing new political expedients. The cumulative effect was gravely detrimental to the President's political stature and his election-year prospects. But there remained the possibility of a vigorous, dramatic comeback.

As the crucial election approached, many people felt that Harry Truman was a perplexed man, but if the President seemed confused and hesitant, this was also symptomatic of a confusion and indecision that affected not only the nation but the world. Not that people of the United States were lacking in courage, national will, or energy. What they did need was a range finder. There was missing that clear precision of thought and statement necessary to clarify issues and establish a forceful national policy.

If the Roosevelt administration had been overweighted on policy and short on administration, the reverse could perhaps be said of the Truman stewardship. Truman had reinstituted Cabinet government, but he had not surrounded himself with enough men schooled in historical perspective and farsighted thinking, and both were essential to develop policy.

However, if Truman could be held delinquent on this count, it was also undeniable that the Republican party, in and out of Congress, had not produced the voice to lead the public to clearer understandings and a steadier will. Its counsels were sorely divided.

Perhaps Senator Vandenberg alone more nearly displayed that scope of historical perspective which the times required. The deftness with which he resolved legislative problems, the attitude with which he approached the job of cooperating with a Democratic administration, and finally his resolute stand on international issues excited admiration in both parties. A Democrat, Senator Carl A. Hatch of New Mexico, called upon members of both parties to emulate Vandenberg's example.



"Actuated and moved solely by an overwhelming purpose to aid in bringing some degree of order and peace to this disordered, warring, and unhappy world," said Hatch early in 1948, "Senator Vandenberg has given as fine an example of non-political and non-partisan approach to these world-wide issues as has ever been given by any man or statesman anywhere."

Yet, in final analysis, only history can be the true judge of men and their official acts. Events that seem prodigious at the moment often are lost in the vaster, definitive pattern of the truly significant. There is, as always, a pronounced tendency in Washington to magnify every governmental change. Yet successive Cabinet crises which seemed to rock the Truman administration and brought prophecies of doom have been largely forgotten. Thus the Ickes-Pauley incident paled into insignificance. Dissensions within the Supreme Court were quieted by the appointment of Fred Vinson as Chief Justice. The inanities of the Morgenthau plan for the perpetual prostration of industrial Germany have quietly been discarded in the light of realities; the somewhat abrupt break with Morgenthau, marked by ill temper on both sides, soon passed into the limbo of things better forgotten.

Assuredly, Harry Truman, by 1948 cannot be stamped as a failure as President of the United States. Viewed against the background of stupendous problems which were obtruding themselves when he took office, his administration oftentimes appeared surprisingly stable and effective. There is much that the President might wish to have forgotten, but there is also much of which he and his supporters may justly be proud.

He had followed through with the successful conclusion of a world war, and had accomplished, with Republican assistance, a strong degree of international cooperation.

When the international emergency arose, he unhesitatingly placed himself and his nation at the head of the forces arrayed against aggressive communism. And he did not deviate from that course. In this fundamental conflict, Truman never for an instant, once the nature of the conflict became clear, hesitated or wavered toward compromise or sacrifice of principle. It was one of the



its motives, nor because of the arduous labors of George C. Marshall, but because it attempted to find a formula for reconciling adamant communism on one side and unyielding reaction on the other. The China problem reached a point where it was necessary either to arm the Central Government to a point where communism could be exterminated en masse, or withdraw and let the struggle proceed. Each side, as Marshall had implied, was shot through with the cancer of social and political disease. To arm the Central Government might dissipate the energies which might better be devoted to the struggle against communism in Europe. At the very least that policy could not but move closer toward conflict with Russia on an alien and comparatively unknown ground. The Truman administration sought courageously to face and solve the Chinese puzzle. It did not succeed, as indeed had no other American administration since 1905. It is easy to blame the Truman administration for this failure, but not so easy to offer a sure-fire formula that would achieve the desired result. Either the forces loosed in the Far East would be impossible to control or national energies would be so severely dissipated as to give a free hand to Russia in the strategic area of Western Europe.

History alone can assess the performance, but history will undoubtedly give the Truman administration credit for sincerely and courageously trying, and the trying has by no means come to an end.

Likewise, history must necessarily credit the President with proceeding from indecision to firmness and accomplishment in the civilian control of atomic energy. No other President ever wrestled with an issue so portentous as the advent of a new age, so fraught with potential blessings and potential tragedy for the human race. The gap from discovery to control is safely bridged, and in the United Nations, the United States policy for adequate international control and inspection of atomic development was not allowed to be weakened by argument or ingenious compromise or evasion.

As a former member of Congress, he sought to accomplish a

reasonable and lasting peace with the legislative agency. When that was not permitted, he struck out on his own, but with good will and firmness. He chided Congress, and attempted to go over its head to the people, though without success. Still, he preserved executive objectivity and independence and declined to surrender himself to the counsels of those who spoke for sectional or special interests.

The President's handling of labor problems, at best, can be said to have been inconsistent. Numerous considerations of the domestic economy, plus consideration of the possible effects upon the democratic liberal forces of Europe, projected themselves into this struggle. Just as the stubbornness of management and labor alike added nothing to their stature, so Truman's harsh demands of May 25, 1946, gave little credit to his judgment, and, in the light of his subsequent veto of the Case bill, actually reflected adversely upon the administration.

When the Republican Congress emasculated what was left of price control, which was little enough, Truman altogether scrapped it for apparent political advantage before the 1946 election. The stratagem did not succeed. It can be said fairly that in his haste to return to a normal, free-enterprise system wherein each industrialist and labor leader would accept his responsibility and discharge it commendably, Harry Truman ended controls with unwarranted haste, just as the industrialist and union managers failed to submerge instant advantage to the overriding necessities of the public welfare. If anything, the administration gravely erred in its zeal to restore, immediately after the war, normal peacetime economic operations, on the presumption that every man, whether representing union or management, would be a citizen-statesman of high ethical standard. This idealistic democratic concept, always so strong in Harry Truman's philosophy, was bogged down in the crass reality of a selfish and ruthless scramble for more wages and more profits.

It is highly debatable whether under the prevailing circumstances any President could have done better. Certainly, it is in-

disputable that in spite of all bungling, the national economy was carried from a period of the utmost tension and extreme danger to peacetime transition without disaster.

Yet there are assets of no mean value alongside the obvious liabilities. Under the President's direction, John L. Lewis was brought to a new respect for government. The President accepted the results of the 1946 election with a wholesome regard for the public will. He was defeated, but not routed. Instead, he was put on his own, freed of a political legacy he had inherited and unsuccessfully sought to translate into law. When the Congress adopted what Truman regarded as unwise fiscal policies and twice passed a tax reduction bill without adequate consideration of emergency international problems or fixing, as the law required, a ceiling on the budget, Truman immediately vetoed both bills. In doing so, he courted political disaster, though subsequent tests of public opinion demonstrated that he had taken the popular course. In the same fashion, he vetoed the Republican wool bill aimed as a wedge at the international trade program. In doing this, he undoubtedly incurred the ill will of many special high-tariff groups.

He was defeated on price programs, and his administration, almost as much as special interests and Congressional failings, was held responsible for a general failure of the housing programs.

The President can be criticized for some of his appointments, for his early tendency toward "government by crony," but subsequently his Cabinet and other appointments and notably the Atomic Energy Commission elicited and deserved a full measure of public approval and respect.

While the apparent success at Potsdam curdled into subsequent failure, notable progress was made in friendly hemispheric relations by the President's visits to Mexico, Canada, and Brazil. Harry Truman acquitted himself well as a friendly, energetic, and valuable ambassador of good will. What personal understanding he failed to achieve with Stalin, he reached with Alemán of Mexico, Mackenzie King of Canada, and Dutra of Brazil.

There is no denying that Harry Truman has grown in office. His mistakes have not been few, but they have been of the head

and not of the heart. Indeed, he has come to realize that statesmanship must adapt itself to realities; that boldness, tempered with prudence, must mark America's policies. In major phases of foreign policy, as the enunciation of the "Truman Doctrine" and the Marshall Plan, he took the lead, and public opinion has supported him. He did not hesitate to call a special session of Congress when it became apparent that action on "aid to Europe" and on the threatening dangers of inflation brooked no delay. President Truman of the United States found himself at the head of the western forces of democracy now arrayed in what people still hoped would be a bloodless struggle for dominance as between personal freedom and totalitarianism. Truman set his course under the guidance of his Cabinet and the soldier-statesman George Marshall, a man of proved ability and integrity as an organizer of vast forces and projects, a man, above all, of firmness, of practical vision, and imagination. Nevertheless, Harry Truman could not blink at the fact that the inspiration and the signals had to come from the White House even though the diplomatic trial was now in the arena of the Assembly of the United Nations and in the councils of the leading powers. Others might suggest and formulate policy, but only he could pull the throttle and order full steam ahead.

It was undeniable that in late 1947 the economy was running like a superheated motor. Industrial production stood at record levels, but in spite of this, the demands for goods and services were fabulous. Prices soared to unprecedented levels. Exports reached record volumes. It was still debatable whether the industrial economy of America could withstand the pressures put upon it, and at the same time support and sustain the entire world in its struggle against economic collapse.

The next five years will, indeed, be decisive in American as well as in world history. There remains unsettled the question whether in Europe the west will be allowed to drift into the orbit of the east, whether communism's corrupt seeds shall be allowed to take root and bear their fruit in collapse, ruin, and bleak totalitarianism. The world is not rid of danger; the basic conflict brought to a showdown by the Missouri farmer has not been concluded.

Will the United Nations fulfill the brave and noble aspirations set down in its charter and voiced again and again by Harry Truman, or will this organization finally follow the melancholy history of the League of Nations?

It is one thing to "plow as straight a furrow as in all Missouri," in rich, yielding black loam, and quite another to plow it through the arid, stony soil of international conflict, hatred, and suspicion.

Yet there seems little doubt, as election time draws near in 1948 and the lines of political struggle are drawn, that on his record "Mr. Missouri" can make a creditable showing.

On his political ledger there are not a few debits, but there were entries on the credit side to more than offset them. If Harry Truman has not evoked admiration, he has aroused respect for what he has tried to do and for what he has done. He has displayed courage and honesty, humanity and humility.

Will Harry Truman, with his faith in the American people so ingrained, so instinctive that it has shaped his entire attitude, his very personality—will this man of the people be able to rally public opinion behind his policies at the decisive moment? Will the American people see in him the standard-bearer of true liberalism, the implacable foe alike of reaction from the Right and from the Left, the champion of true democracy?

Harry Truman, President of the United States, like the citizen of Nebraska or California or New York or Texas, is being tested in the gigantic crucible of history. That he has labored hard and sincerely is undeniable; whether he has succeeded, only the future can tell.

# INDEX

## A

- Acheson, Dean**, 66
  - and control of atomic energy, 113-114
  - and European aid, 91
  - speech of, on policy toward Russia, 89-90
- Acheson-Lilienthal report**, 115-116, 118, 120
- Agricultural benefits**, 185
- Aiken, George D.**, 169, 185, 191
- Air bases**, abandonment of, after V-J Day, 33
- Alabam**, prize bull presented to Truman, 240
- Alamogordo, New Mexico**, 4, 27
  - success of atomic bomb at, 102
- Albania**, invasion of Greece by, 81
- Alemán, Miguel**, 247, 262
- Alexander, Viscount**, 248
- Alexandria, Virginia**, Major General Vaughan's speech at, 229
- Allen, George**, 107, 120
  - as head of RFC, 214-215, 229
  - lack of dignity of, 229-230
  - retirement of, 230
  - and Truman, 229
- Allied Council**, in Tokyo, 42
- Amendment to Constitution** limiting White House tenure, 169
- American Army** (*see* United States Army)
- American government**, nature of, 12
  - weakness of, 5
- American Labor Party**, 235
- American Medical Association**, 168
- American people**, decisive years for, 263-264
  - and European relief, 91
  - reaction of, to Roosevelt's death, 6
  - and Truman, 8
- American people**, Truman's faith in, 264
- Anderson, Clinton P.**, 207, 227
  - and speculation in commodity markets, 223-224
- Anti-lynching bill**, 14
- Anti-poll tax bill**, 14
- Antistrike measures**, 132
- Appropriations, Federal**, and income, 182
  - war, canceling of, and public debt, 175
- Arab states, and Palestine**, 94
- Arends, Leslie**, 13
- Argentina**, admission of, to United Nations, 23
- Arkansas**, 155
- Atcheson, George, Jr.**, 64-65
- Atlantic Charter**, 40
- Atlee, Clement**, and establishment of Atomic Energy Commission, 108-109
  - Russian attitude toward, at Potsdam conference, 24-25
- Atomic age**, 255, 260
- Atomic bomb**, British partnership in, 108
  - Churchill's views on, 47-48
  - control of, international, 103, 115, 124, 260
  - thesis of, 114
  - United Nations committee to study, 113
  - report of, 115
  - United States and, 103-104
  - development of, 27, 101
  - civilian and peaceful, 102, 124
  - first test in, 4, 27, 124
  - international nature of, 112
  - scientific research for, 103
  - and the future, 101-124



- Atomic bomb, proposed use of, as
    - threat to Russia, 79
    - psychology created by, 101
    - Russia's knowledge of, 27, 83
    - secret of, fear of barter of, 42-43
    - United States monopoly of, 108
  - Atomic Energy Commission, 79, 104
    - authority of, 107
    - civilian, 117
    - appointment of, 120-121, 261
    - authority of, 121
    - home of, 121
    - with military liaison committee, 117
    - with President as final arbiter, 117
    - enforcing of safeguards by, 109, 118
    - military representation on, 111
    - under Security Council, and danger of Russian veto, 109, 119
    - and United Nations, 109, 118
  - Atomic policy, United States, 260
    - compromise on, 79
    - Congressional thinking on, 101
    - contending philosophies on, 103-124
    - Wallace's objection to, 55, 58
  - Augusta* (cruiser), 27
  - Austin, Warren R., 13
    - and "Truman Doctrine," 86
  - and Vandenberg, 35
  - Australia, 61
  - Austria, Communists in, 206
    - peace treaty with, 34, 80
  - Axtel, Enos, 230
- B**
- Bacher, Robert Fox, 120
  - Baldwin, Raymond, 204-205
  - Balkan States, agreements concerning, at Moscow conference, 43
    - communism in, 82
    - Soviet policies in, 39, 97
    - threat of war in, 93
  - Ball, Joseph H., 190
  - Baptist Church, criticism of Truman by, 239
  - Barbershop quartets, organization for maintenance of, 240
  - Barkley, Alben, 7, 144, 178, 193
    - and price-control bill, 148
    - and split in Democratic party, 15
  - Barnard, Chester L., 114
  - Baruch, Bernard, negotiations of, on atomic energy policy, 58
    - as United States representative on Atomic Energy Commission, 118
    - and Soviet representatives, 119
    - and Wallace, 119
  - Bataan, smuggling of military supplies to, 61
  - Bethesda Naval Hospital, 20, 143
  - Bevin, Ernest, 51
  - Biddle, Francis, 221, 226, 233
  - Biffle, Leslie L., 7, 108, 137
  - Big Three leaders, authority of, 5
    - conference of, at Potsdam, 24
  - Black, Associate Justice, 164
  - Black markets, 142-143
    - in automobiles, 205
  - Blandy, Admiral William H. P., 112
  - Borah, William E., 254
  - Boston, 14
  - Bowles, Chester, 142-143, 147, 114
    - resignation of, 144
  - Brazil, 250-252, 262
  - Bretton Woods conference in New Hampshire, 22
    - lending agencies of, 31
  - Brewster, Owen, 232
  - Bricker, Senator, 124
  - Bridges, Styles, 177
    - and aid to China, 74-75
  - British Army, 3
  - Bronx, the, by-election vote in, 235
  - Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, 134
  - Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, 134, 137-138
  - Brown, Clarence, 13, 152
  - Buffer states, Russian insistence on, 49, 53

- Building contractors, and home construction, 212  
 (See also Housing; Industry; Lumber)
- Building materials, controls on, 213  
 cost of, 211, 213  
 priorities on, 212-213  
 (See also Housing; Lumber)
- Bulgaria, invasion of Greece by, 81, 94  
 peace treaty with, 80
- Bureau of the Budget, 185
- Bureau of Internal Revenue, 186
- Burton, Harold, 227
- Bush, Vannevar, 106
- Business, record levels of, 201
- Byrd, Harry F., 15, 78  
 and control of atomic energy, 111-112  
 and tax reduction, 184
- Byrnes, James F., and Chicago convention, 7, 19  
 on committee for legislation on atomic bomb, 103  
 conciliatory attitude of, toward Russia, 26  
 and control of atomic energy, 109, 113, 118  
 as Director of Economic Stabilization, 141  
 and Hurley, 64-66  
 and Marshall, 69  
 at peace conference of 1946, 50  
 poor health of, 72, 79  
 qualities and capabilities of, 20  
 as Roosevelt's "Assistant President," 20  
 as Secretary of State, appointment of, 23, 40, 227  
 autonomy of, 41  
 at Big Three conference at Potsdam, 24  
 development of foreign policy under, 79  
 failures of, 41  
 lack of cooperation with President by, 40-41, 228
- Byrnes, James F., as Secretary of State, at meetings of Council of Foreign Ministers, 33-34  
 in Moscow, 41-43, 109  
 report to nation on, 44-45  
 and Russian intransigence, 33-34, 49-50, 55, 79  
 during surrender of Japan, 29  
 and Vandenberg, 49, 52  
 as Supreme Court Justice, 20  
 and Wallace, 56-60
- C
- Cabinet, Roosevelt's, 221-222, 227-228  
 Truman's, 7-8, 40, 225-227, 256, 258, 261, 263  
 and coal strike, 161  
 difficulties of, 228  
 Ickes's resignation from, 222  
 improved staff work of, 228  
 and individual responsibility, 228  
 loss of prestige of, 234  
 and meat problem, 152
- California, 86, 130, 196, 235, 256
- California Institute of Technology, 114
- Capitalism, Russia's hope for collapse of, 53-54  
 as threat to Soviet system, 53
- Caruthersville, Missouri, 107, 239, 241
- Case, Francis, 132
- Case antistrike bill, 132, 137-138  
 vetoing of, 138-139, 157, 168, 190, 261  
 overriding of, by House, 140
- Chiang Kai-shek, 61, 70  
 Wedemeyer's opinion of, 75
- Chicago, Democratic convention at, 7, 19
- China, 28  
 attempt of Russia to exclude from peace conference, 50
- Central Government of, 61-67, 160  
 corruption of, 71-72  
 Marshall's opinion of, 72-73  
 surrender of Japanese arms to, 62-63, 70-71

- China, Central Government of,  
     Wedemeyer's report on, 74-75  
     civil strife in, 62-76  
     Communists in, 61-65, 67-76  
     Marshall's opinion of, 72-73  
     effect of termination of lend-lease  
         on, 31  
     foreign policy toward, 259-260  
         secondary place of, 82-83  
     Kuomintang party in, 73  
     lack of unification in, 62, 70-76  
     local wars in, 72  
     Marshall in, 70-73  
         difficulties of, 71  
     North, 62-63, 71  
     open-door policy in, 73  
     problems of, 70  
     results of Japanese invasion of, 62  
     United States aid to, 74-76  
 Chinese politics, 69-70  
     and failure of Marshall's mission,  
         73  
 Chungking, 64  
 Churchill, and balance of power, 37  
     defeat of, 24  
     at Potsdam, 24-26, 229  
     Russia's respect for, 24  
     speech of, at Fulton, Missouri, 47-  
         48, 229  
     and Stalin, 25  
         mutual distrust of, 25-26  
 CIO, 192-193  
 Citrus fruit growers, 196  
 Civil rights, Truman's stand on, 236-  
     237  
 Civil War, 255  
     Truman's family in, 14, 236  
 Clark, Bennett Champ, 239-240  
 Clark, Tom C., 230-231  
     and coal strike, 161-162  
     and speculation in commodity  
         markets, 223  
 Clay, General, 51  
 Clayton, William L., 91  
     and foreign trade, 198-199  
 Clayton Act, 162, 173  
 Clifford, Clark, 60, 228  
     and coal strike, 161  
 Clifford, Clark, and Taft-Hartley  
     bill, 192  
 Closed shop, outlawing of, 191  
 Clothing, and cotton goods, decon-  
     trol of, 149  
     increased cost of, 205  
     Truman's taste in, 240  
 Coal, exporting of, 160  
     and foreign policy, 160-161  
     and national economy, 160  
 Coal miners, 159-160  
     (See also John L. Lewis)  
 Coal mines, government operation  
     of, 160  
 Colorado, 104, 110, 158, 196  
 Commodity markets, decline in, 208-  
     209  
     speculation in, 223  
 Communism, 145  
     in Austria, 206  
     versus capitalism, 192  
     Chinese, 61-65, 67-71, 260  
         need of aid against, 74  
         and Soviet policy, 71  
     in Europe, 34  
         and United States, 192, 206, 259-  
             260  
     in France, 96, 206  
     in Italy, 96, 206  
     and labor unions, 191  
     major offensive against, 98, 259  
     in Palestine, 96  
     versus western democracy, 51, 81,  
         259, 263  
 Communist International Brigade, 93  
 Communists, Chinese, 61-65, 67-76  
     arming of, 61-62, 67  
     duplicity of, 70-71  
     suspicion of United States mo-  
         tives by, 71  
     suspected, in TVA, 121-122  
     and Wallace, 234  
 Compton, Arthur H., 106  
 Conant, James Bryant, 106  
 Condon, Edward U., 110  
 Congress of Industrial Organiza-  
     tions, Political Action Commit-  
     tee, 147

- Congress of the United States, and  
aid to Greece, 93-94  
appropriations of, for Chinese relief, 97  
for European recovery program, 100  
for European relief, 87, 97-98  
attitude of, toward Truman, 10-11, 16  
committee chairmen in, 15  
conflict of, with President, 9-10  
and control of atomic energy, 104-107, 111, 114  
debate on, 113-117  
joint committee on, 118  
law passed by, 118  
delegation of authority by, to Executive in wartime, 12  
termination of, 12, 15  
dependence of, on Roosevelt's leadership, 16  
and disarmament, 32  
and domestic policy, 130  
Eightieth, 165  
accomplishments of, 169-170  
controversial developments of, 174  
and Federal budget, 177, 261  
foreign policy of, 195-196  
and foreign trade, 196-200  
and high cost of living, 204-209  
and Kansas City election frauds, 232  
machinery for, 168-169  
and price controls, 204, 206, 261  
Republican control of, 178, 205  
and Smith-Connally Act, 189  
and Taft-Hartley bill, 188-195  
and Truman, 167-174, 202  
conflict between, 174, 196  
and universal military training, 171-173  
and foreign policy, Chinese, 74-76  
future, 79  
Marshall's, 83-100  
as handicap to President, 9  
Hoover's report to, on European relief, 87-88
- Congress of the United States, jealousies in, 9  
Labor Committees of, 130-131  
and labor legislation, 136-140, 188-194  
lack of help and information for, 9  
postwar restiveness of, 127  
and problems of future, 16  
and railroad strike, 135  
and ratification of peace treaties, 21  
Republican minority in, in 1945, 130  
and Roosevelt's lend-lease program, 98-99  
and Russia, 79-83  
Seventy-ninth, 141, 169  
and canceling of war contracts, 175-176  
and decontrols, 149  
and foreign trade, 196, 261  
hostility of, to Truman, 155  
and housing, 212-215  
subsidies for, 212-213  
and price controls, 142-148, 206, 261  
split over, 148  
Republican majority in, 155-159, 205  
disadvantage of, 166  
program of, 158  
Truman's cooperation with, 159  
on budget and tax problems, 176, 182  
and universal military training, 171  
special session of, for aid to Europe, 96  
unwieldy character of, 9  
Congressional purge, Roosevelt's, in 1938, 16  
Connally, Tom, 226  
as chairman of Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 49-50, 66-67  
and peace negotiations, 55  
and Wallace, 59-60  
Connecticut, 105, 109, 204

- Controls, on building materials, 213  
 export, 208  
 price (*see* Price control)  
 public impatience over, 206  
 rent (*see* Rent control)  
 restoration of, 206-207  
 on scarce metals, 171  
 voluntary, 207-208  
 wage, 147  
 wartime, relaxation of, 127, 129  
   termination of, 142  
 Cornell University, 120  
 Cost of living, high, 201-209  
   in 1920, 201  
 Council of economic advisors, Truman's, 202, 211-212  
 Council of Foreign Ministers, 81  
   establishment of, 25  
   meetings of, in London, 33-34, 41, 45, 132  
   in Moscow, in 1945, 41, 109  
   realignment of policy following, 152  
   in 1947, failure of, 92  
   Marshall's preparations for, 80-81  
   problems of, 83  
   report on, 92  
   in Paris, 33  
   in April, 1946, firmness toward Molotov at, 49  
   in June, 1946, 50  
   in September, 1946, 55, 58  
   preliminary conference of, in 1945, 36  
   and Wallace's Madison Square address, 57-60  
 Cox, Eugene, 14  
 Crawford, Fred, 145
- D
- Dairy interests, and reciprocal trade, 196  
 Dardanelles, control of, 81  
   and Russia, 95
- Debt reduction, 168, 175, 178, 182, 202  
   (*See also* Public debt)  
 Decontrol, 148-150  
   (*See also* Controls; Price control; Price control bill; Rent control)  
 Decontrol Board (*see* Price Decontrol Board)  
 Deflation, 209  
 Delany, Hugh, 65  
 Demobilization, in light of United Nations Charter and Potsdam conference, 33  
   point system of, 32  
   rapid, danger of, 32-33  
   and Russia, 52  
 Democracy, capitalistic, versus communism, 51, 53, 259, 263  
   Russia's conception of, 53  
   Russia's suspicions of, 47  
   western conception of, 53  
 Democratic convention, of 1944, 7  
   split of Texas delegation at, 7  
   and vice-presidential candidate, 10  
 Democratic National Committee, 220, 226, 233  
   oil company contributions to, 221  
 Democratic party, and civil rights, 237  
   conservative wing of, 15, 131-132  
   and Wallace, 57  
   and Federal budget, 185  
   and high cost of living, 201  
   liberals in, 15, 167, 174  
   and Lilienthal's appointment, 123  
   in 1946, 151, 155  
   loss of labor vote in, 157  
   split in, 159, 167  
   in 1948 elections, 191  
   and organized labor, 130, 140, 190  
   progressive policy in, 174  
   reactionary, 167  
   Roosevelt fanatics in, 15  
   at Roosevelt's death, 14  
   split in, 7, 15  
   and tax reduction, 180-181

Democratic party, and third party,

235

and Truman, lack of cooperation  
of, 131

(See also Democrats)

Democrats, conservative, 132, 256

and Russia, 78

and Federal budget, 178

liberal, 236

left-wing, and Wallace, 54

New Deal, 159

Northern, 235

liberal, 15

Southern, 159

and civil rights, 237

and Negro vote, 235

and party reaction, 14

support of Roosevelt foreign  
policy by, 15

and tax reduction, 183-184

and Wallace's third party, 256

Depression, 181

Des Moines, Iowa, 120

Dewey, Thomas E., 7, 250

and aid to China, 74

and Palestine question, 94

Diplomatic corps, 5

Diplomacy, 263

British, 47

Communist, duplicity of, 70

foreign, 5

international, 24

Roosevelt pattern of, 19

Russian, aggressive, 119

Vandenberg's contribution to, 47

Disarmament, universal agreement  
on, 116

Displaced persons of Europe, admis-  
sion of, to United States, 168,  
171

in British and United States zones  
of occupation, 168

Donaldson, Jess, 227

Doughton, Robert L., 187

Douglas, Helen Gahagan, 86

Dumbarton Oaks conference, 6

Stettinius at, 20

Dutra, Eurico Gaspar, 251, 262

## E

East, the, and meat supply, 151-152

Eccles, Marriner, as chairman of  
Federal Reserve, 207

demotion of, 235

and Taft, 235

and Truman, 235-236

Economic strength, in relation to  
military strength, 33

Economics, "boom and bust" school  
of, 204

Economy, domestic, 132

danger of prosperity to, 205

in 1947, 263

peacetime, 128

world, and United States produc-  
tion, 207, 263

Eisenhower, General Dwight, 33, 237

Election frauds, in Missouri, 230-232

Elections, Congressional, in 1946,  
151, 176

indignation vote in, 157

labor vote in, 157, 188, 190, 261

left-wing vote in, 77

presidential, of 1948, 174-175

and tax reduction, 184-185

third party in, 191

Engel, Albert J., 180

Europe, economic dissolution in, 33

economic recovery of, 80

emergency programs for, 80

peace treaties in, 80

rehabilitation of, 91

(See also Marshall Plan)

relief for (see European relief)

and United Nations relief agen-  
cies, 33

Western, aid to, 74, 91, 96

communism in, 76, 82, 96

non-Communist, aid to, 91

and Russia, 260

European recovery program, ap-  
propriations for, 98

Congress's attitude toward, 100

investigation of, 98

European relief, 33, 96, 263

appropriations for, 97

- European relief, changed to rehabilitation, 91-92
- Hoover's studies on, 87-88
- solution for, 88
- European waterways and canals, strategic, international control of, 25
- Excess-profits tax, 176
- reinstatement of, 287
- "Executive Avenue," 40
- Executive department, experts hired by, 9
- wartime authority of, 12
- (*See also* Presidency)
- Executive Mansion (*see* White House)
- Executive office (*see* Executive department; Presidency)
- Experts, employed by executive department, 9
- F**
- Fair Employment Practices bill, 14
- Fair Employment Practices Commission, 236
- Fair Employment Practices Committee, 128
- Far East, 260
- Marshall in, 70
- threat of communism in, 74
- United States loans and credit to, 69
- Far Eastern Commission, and MacArthur, 42
- nuisance value of, to Russia, 42
- Farm bloc, in Congress, 141-142
- Farm labor, 141
- Farm program, Truman's, 168
- Farmers, dirt, 226, 240
- and price controls, 152
- FBI (*see* Federal Bureau of Investigation)
- Federal budget, 158, 168
- ceiling for, 182, 185, 261
- joint Congressional committee on, 177-178
- reduction of, 177-178, 204, 261
- Federal budget, scientific, 182
- Truman's, 185
- Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Kansas City election frauds, 231
- Federal Council of Churches, 82
- Federal Tariff Commission, 198
- and foreign trade, 197
- Ferguson, Homer, 224, 231-232
- Fermi, Enrico, 112
- Fernandes, Raul, 252
- Filibuster, against appointment of Pearlman, 232
- on price-control legislation, 145
- Fissionable material, denaturing of, 115
- destruction of United States supply of, 118-119
- (*See also* Atomic bomb, control of)
- Flanders, Ralph, 207
- Florida, 86, 149, 191
- Flynn, Ed, 235
- Flynn machine, in New York, 256
- Foreign policy, American, based on principles, not personalities, 34
- bipartisan, 195, 206
- Congressional, 21, 57, 88
- and Byrnes, 23, 34, 57
- failures of, 45
- vital lack in, 80
- toward China, 61-76
- and Connally, 57
- difficulties in field of, 21-22
- and Eightieth Congress, 196
- evolution of, 77-80
- fundamentals of, 38-39
- low point of, 41
- under Marshall, Chinese as secondary, 82
- dynamic quality of, 87
- toward Palestine, 94
- reorientation of European, 82-100
- in terms of strategic military advantage, 83
- at Potsdam, 26
- realistic versus idealistic, 89

- foreign policy, reassessment of, after  
   Moscow conference, 44  
   Roosevelt's, 15, 85  
   strengthening of, by Vandenberg, 35, 47, 49-51, 55, 57, 195  
   Wallace's misgivings about, 54  
   and Wallace's speech at Madison Square Garden, 57-60  
     aftereffects of, 77  
   British, success of, 47  
 Forrestal, James V., 227  
   and control of atomic energy, 111-112  
 France, and American coal, 161  
   atomic energy experiments in, 116  
   communism in, 81-82, 96  
   fight against, 97, 206  
 Frankfurter, Felix, 162  
 Fulbright, J. William, 155  
 Fulton, Hugh, 4  
 Fulton, Missouri, Churchill's speech at, 47-49, 229  
   Russia's reaction to, 49  
  
**G**  
 Gallup Poll, on Truman popularity in 1945, 11  
   (See also Polls)  
 Gearhart, Bertrand W., 196-197  
 General Electric, 114  
 General Motors, 129  
 Geneva, International Trade Conference at, 91, 196, 198-200  
 George, Walter F., 15, 195  
 Georgia, 14-15, 195  
 Germany, 80  
   and American coal, 161  
   communism in, 82  
   demilitarization of, 50  
   fall of, 3, 21  
   formula for extracting reparations from, 25  
   joint occupation of, 36, 97  
   looting of, by Russia, 53  
   peace treaty with, 34  
   research on atomic energy in, 112  
   surrender of, 23, 28  
  
 Germany, western, joint administration of, 97  
 Gerry, Theodore F., 15  
 G.I. Bill of Rights, and loans for homes, 211  
 Goldsborough, T. Alan, 161-163  
 GOP (see Republican party)  
 Government, economy in, 168  
   study on machinery of, 171  
 Government employees, 158  
 Government planners, liberal wing of, 142  
   (See also New Deal; Roosevelt programs and policies)  
 Graham, Wallace K., 224  
 Grandview, Missouri, 231, 244, 246, 251  
 Great Britain, 28  
   and American coal, 161  
   and atomic bomb, 108  
   experiments on, 116  
   future control of, 108-109  
   financial aid to, 259  
   and Palestine, 94  
   withdrawal from, 94-95  
   removal of troops from Greece by, 81-83  
   effect of, on United States policy, 82-84  
   threat of communism to, 82, 91  
 Greece, aid to, 91, 93  
   American mission to, 93  
   communism in, 81-83, 93  
   guerrilla warfare in, 91  
   helplessness of government of, 81, 93  
   removal of British troops and support from, 81-83  
 Groves, Major General Leslie R., 105, 111-112  
   and McMahon bill, 113  
  
**H**  
 Haberdashery store, Truman's, 240  
 Hague machine, in New Jersey, 256  
 Halleck, Charles, 13, 132, 183, 187  
   as Majority Leader, 198



- Halsey, Admiral, 3  
 Hanes, John W., 178  
 Hanford, Washington, 101, 120  
 Hannegau, Robert, 226, 233  
 Harriman, W. Averill, 207  
   at Potsdam conference, 26  
   as Wallace's successor, 225  
 Hartley, Fred A., 190  
 Harvard University, 106  
   Marshall's speech at, 90-92  
 Hatch, Carl A., 257-258  
 Hawkes, Albert W., 149  
 Health insurance program, Truman's, 141, 168  
 Hemisphere conference (*see* Inter-American conference)  
 Henderson, Leon, 203  
 Hiroshima, 28  
 Hitler, and Stalin, and partition of Poland, 97  
 Holy Land (*see* Palestine)  
 Hoover, Herbert, 256  
   and European relief, solution for, 88  
   studies of, 87-88  
 Hoover, J. Edgar, 231  
 Hopkins, Harry, illness of, 21  
 H.R. 1776 (*see* Lend-lease)  
 Housing, 210-216  
   economics of, 210-211  
   estimated need for, 213  
   Federal subsidies for, 212  
   financing of, 210-211  
   government goal for, in 1947, 211  
   failure of, 212  
   inadequate, miseries of, 216  
   prefabricated (*see* Prefabricated houses)  
   and price control, 146, 168  
   and rents, 210-211  
   Truman's program of, 168, 173-174, 202-203, 262  
   (*See also* Building contractors; Building materials; Lumber)  
 Housing expediter (*see* Wyatt, Wilson)  
 Hull, Cordell, 20  
   and foreign trade, 196  
   Hull, Cordell, speech of, on lend-lease, 99  
   and Vandenberg, 35  
 Hungary, communism in, 81  
   peace treaty with, 80-81  
 Hurley, Patrick J., 68  
   as Ambassador to China, 61-63  
   resignation of, 64-65, 67  
   to support Central Government, 62  
   and Byrnes, 64  
   and communism in State Department, 63-66  
   description of, 61  
   illness of, 63  
   and Roosevelt, 61  
   as roving trouble shooter, 61  
   as Secretary of War, 61  
   before Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 65-67  
   and Stalin, 61-62  
 Hutchins, Robert M., and scientists' view on control of atomic energy, 112

## I

- Ickes, Harold L., 221-223, 258  
   resignation of, 222  
 Idaho, 86, 173  
 Illinois, 13, 130, 171, 235, 256  
 Income, farm and wage, 202  
   fixed, 202  
   national, in 1947, 201  
 Income groups, lower, and Democratic party, 14  
   and tax reduction (*see* Tax reduction)  
 Independence, Missouri, 154  
*Independence* (Presidential plane), 246  
 Indiana, 13, 132, 183, 225  
 Industry, aircraft, 133  
   aluminum, 133  
   American, and foreign trade, 197  
   automotive, 131, 133  
   basic, 133  
   construction, 213

- Industry, construction, building**  
   codes for, 214  
   and unions, 214  
   (See also Building contractors;  
   Building materials; Housing)  
**electrical, 131, 133**  
   and labor, conference between,  
     129-131  
   (See also Labor; Labor-manage-  
   ment relations)  
**lumber, 149**  
   (See also Building materials;  
   Housing)  
**major, and strikes, 133**  
**meat-packing, 133**  
   (See also Meat)  
**oil, 133**  
**pottery, 196**  
**pulpwood, 149**  
**rubber, 133**  
**steel, 131**  
   wage settlement in, 133  
**sugar-beet, domestic, 149**  
**wool, price-support program for,**  
   198, 261  
**Inflation, 187, 206, 263**  
   battle against, 144, 235-236  
   postwar, 127, 201, 211  
   and price control, 144, 148, 205  
   runaway, 148  
**Inter-American conference on mu-  
 tual defense, 250**  
**International Bank and World Mon-  
 etary Fund, 32**  
   validated by Congress, 22  
**International bargaining, expansion**  
   of, 22  
   (See also Foreign trade)  
**International cooperation, 13**  
   implemented by agreements be-  
   tween nations, 35  
   program for, drafted at Paris, 98  
   Russia's attitude toward, 98  
   United States donations for, 98  
   without Russia, 78  
   and Vandenberg, 35-36, 78  
   and world peace, 35  
**International exchange, promotion**  
   of, 197  
**International relations, United States**  
   commitments involved in, 178  
   Vandenberg's conception of, 52  
   Wallace's conception of, 54  
   (See also Foreign policy)  
**International relief (see Relief)**  
**International trade (see Foreign**  
   trade)  
**International Trade Conference at**  
   Geneva, 91  
**International Trade Organization,**  
   drafting of charter for, 200  
**Investigations, Congressional, into**  
   foreign and domestic affairs,  
   169-170  
**Iran, oil resources of, 39**  
   Russian withdrawal from, 95  
**Iron curtain, 40, 48, 98, 119**  
**Isacson, Leo, 235**  
**Isolationism, 13, 190**  
   economic, 199  
   and Vandenberg, 35, 51  
**Italian colonies, in Africa, argument**  
   over disposal of, 50  
   Russia's claim on, 81  
   Russia's failure to obtain, 95  
**Italian Trieste, as international city,**  
   50  
**Italy, and American coal, 161**  
   communism in, 81-82, 96  
   fight against, 97, 206  
   peace treaty with, 25, 80  
**Ives, Irving, 191-192**

## J

- Jackson, Andrew, 253-255**  
   and Congress, 16, 167  
**Jackson, Associate Justice, 164**  
**Jacobson, Eddie, 240**  
**Japan, 3, 36**  
   danger of communism in, 74  
   invasion of, 23  
   MacArthur in, 42, 78, 82  
   offensive against, 23  
   peace negotiations of, 28  
   Russian occupation troops in, 78  
   Russia's war against, 27-28

Japan, strategic position of, 83  
surrender of, 28-29, 175  
ultimatum to, 28

Jefferson Island, Maryland, 239

Jenkins, Thomas, 196-197

Jewish problem, politico-economic  
considerations of, 94

United States stand on, 94-95, 235

Jewish vote, in by-election, 235, 256

Jews, admission of, into Palestine, 94  
American, 95

(See also Palestine; Zionism)

Jim Crowism, 236

Johnson, Andrew, 170

Johnson, Ed, 104

Johnson bill, on control of atomic  
energy, 104-105, 109

Johnston, Alvanley, 134, 137

Joint Congressional Economic Com-  
mittee, 203

Jones, Jesse, 230

Judd, Walter H., 74

## K

Kamikaze attacks, 3

Kansas City, Missouri, 219, 224, 240,  
244

election frauds in, 230-232

*Kansas City Star*, 230-231

Kelly-Nash machine, in Chicago, 256

Kem, James P., 231

Kentucky, 104

Kilgore, Harley, 149

King, Mackenzie, 248, 262

Knutson, Harold, 178-179, 183, 187

and foreign trade, 196-197

tax-reduction bill of, 179

rewriting of, 180

Korea, danger of communism in, 74,  
80

five-year trusteeship over, 42

Kremlin, 21

Krug, Julius A., 207

appointment of, 225

and John L. Lewis, 160-161

Kuhn, Loeb & Company, 120

Kuomintang party, 73

Kuril Islands, 36

Kwantung Army, in Manchuria, 23,  
28

## L

Labor, 132

antagonism of, to Byrnes, 7

bosses of, 189

exploitation of, 188

and industry, conference between,  
129-131

showdown in, 133-134

(See also Labor-management re-  
lations)

intransigence of, 190

Northern, and Democratic party,  
14

organized, 133-141

curbing of, 174

and politics, 130, 140, 190

and price control, 152-154

rights of, 14

(See also Labor unions)

and war production, 189

(See also Strikes; Wage in-  
creases)

Labor disputes, 55

Roosevelt's settlement of, 228

(See also Strikes)

Labor legislation, 132, 136-141, 158,  
188-191, 261

and Eightieth Congress, 168

Republican, 189

Truman's rejection of, 204

against unions, 190-191

Labor-Management Conference, 130

advisory committee of, 130

Labor-management relations, 129-  
130, 140, 190-191

equal responsibilities in, 190

labor's failure in, 191

and Schwellenbach, 225

solution for difficulties in, 139-140

Labor unions, and communism, 191

destruction of, through regulation,  
190-191

and national welfare, 189

- labor unions, restraints for, 189
  - wage-increase demands of, 129-130  
(*See also* Labor, organized)
  - Lafayette Park, 6, 29
  - land reclamation, 185
  - Langer, William, 232
  - Latin America, and United Nations, 23
  - League of Nations, 48, 264
  - Leahy, Admiral William, 27
    - and American policy toward Russia, 43
    - career of, 43
    - and Moscow conference, 43-44
    - as presidential Chief of Staff, 43, 242
  - Legislative Reorganization Act, 168-169, 176, 178, 182
  - Lend-lease, bill providing, 99
    - humanitarian spirit of, 31
    - versus isolationism, 190
    - 1948 version of, 100
    - termination of, 26, 31, 33
      - effect of, on China, 31
      - on Britain, 31
  - Lewis, John L., 159-164, 261
    - defeat of, 164
    - defiance of Roosevelt by, 159-160
    - economic power of, 160-161
    - fine imposed on, 163
    - and government, 162
      - cited for contempt of, 162-163
    - injunction against, 161-162
    - and mine owners, 161
    - public opinion on, 164
    - and Supreme Court, 162-163
    - and Taft-Hartley bill, 193
    - and Truman, 160-161
      - grudge against, 159
  - Lilienthal, David E., 114
    - as chairman of Atomic Energy Commission, 120-121
    - confirming of, 123
    - speech of, in Senate hearings, 121-123
  - Lincoln, Abraham, 253-255
    - comparison of Marshall with, 67
  - Littell, Norman, 221
  - Lobbies, labor and management, 190
    - oil reserves, 220
  - Lodge, Henry Cabot, Sr., 35-36
  - Lodge-Brown bill, 171
  - Long, Huey, 225
  - "Long Hard Look Department," 228
  - Los Alamos, New Mexico, laboratory, 106, 114, 120
  - Louisiana, 225
  - Louisville, Kentucky, 212
  - Lumber, shortage of, 214  
(*See also* Industry, lumber)
  - Lustron Corporation of Chicago, 214
  - Lynching, 236  
(*See also* Anti-lynching bill)
- M
- MacArthur, General Douglas, 3, 64, 82
    - attitude of, in Japan, 78
    - authority of, in Tokyo, 42
    - reaction of, to Moscow agreements, 42, 44
  - McCabe, Thomas, 235
  - McCarran, Patrick, 232
  - McCormack, John, 159
    - as Democratic Majority Leader, 14, 144
    - and Truman, 16
  - McGovern, William M., 74
  - McGrath, J. Howard, 233
  - McKellar, Kenneth, 120, 144
    - and Lilienthal, 121, 124
  - McMahon, Brien, as chairman of Senate Atomic Energy Committee, 109, 116-117, 124
    - bill for civilian control introduced by, 110
    - and General Groves, 111-113
    - resolution of, on atomic energy, 105, 109
  - Magill, Roswell, 178
  - Maine, 120, 232
  - Management, 131-133
    - abuses of, 188
    - responsibility of, 190

- Management, restraints on, 189  
 (See also Industry; Labor-management relations)
- Manchuria, Communist Russian armies in, 76  
 Japanese Army in, 23  
 looting of, by Russia, 42, 53, 80  
 removal of Russian troops from, 42  
 return of Russia's economic interest in, 36  
 Russia's drive into, at close of war, 28
- Manhattan District, 112, 115  
 wiping out of, 121
- Manhattan Project, 105
- Marines, alerting of, in Balkan crisis, 93
- Marshall, General George Catlett, 52  
 as Ambassador to China, 68, 260  
 denunciation of Communists and Central Government by, 72-73  
 failure of, 72  
 foreign policy of, 68-70  
 report of, 72-73  
 as Chief of Staff, 27, 33, 68  
 demobilization point system of, 32  
 retirement of, 67  
 as Secretary of State, and aid to China, 74  
 appointment of, 227  
 and atomic energy, 101  
 and displaced persons, 171  
 and European recovery program, 99-100  
 and foreign policy, cooperation with Truman on, 82-83, 96  
 toward Greece and Turkey, 82-83  
 loss of prestige of, 234  
 at Moscow conference of 1947, 83, 92  
 and Palestine question, 96-97  
 reaction of China to appointment of, 72  
 speech of, at Harvard University, 90-92
- Marshall, General George Catlett, as Secretary of State, speech of, after Moscow conference, 92  
 tasks faced by, 80  
 and world trade, 199  
 (See also Marshall Plan)  
 Truman's opinion of, 67-68
- Marshall, Mrs. George C., 68
- Marshall Plan, 91, 263  
 calculated risks of, 92  
 opposition of Russia to, 98  
 Russia's attacks on, 92
- Martin, Joseph W., Jr., advisers of, 13  
 as Republican leader, 13  
 as Speaker of House, 158, 170, 178  
 and aid to China, 75  
 and tax reduction, 183
- Maryland, 15, 78, 116, 161-162, 221
- Massachusetts, 13, 158, 159, 170, 178
- May, Andrew Jackson, 104
- May bill, 105, 109
- May-Johnson bill, 105  
 reaction of scientists to, 105-106
- Meat, price control of, 149-155  
 rationing of, 207  
 shortage of, 207  
 (See also Industry, meat-packing)
- Medical program, Truman's, 141, 168
- Metals, scarce, controls over export and import of, 171
- Mexico, 247-248, 250
- Michener, Earl, 13
- Michigan, 13, 78, 130, 147, 180
- Middle East, 81
- Military aggression, Truman's denunciation of, 39
- Military training and education, universal, 171-173
- Millikin, Eugene, 112, 158  
 as chairman of Senate Finance Committee, 196-197  
 speech of, on control of atomic energy, 110-111
- Mineworkers, 159-160
- Minimum wage, 128, 141  
 increase of, 202

Minnesota, 74, 190, 196  
 Minton, Sherman, 225  
 Mississippi, 14, 79  
 Missouri, 7, 32, 166, 171, 219, 226, 240, 263-264  
   election frauds in, 230-232  
*Missouri* (battleship), signing of surrender on, 30  
 "Missouri Gang," 166, 219  
 "Mr. Missouri" (*see* Truman, Harry)  
 Molotov, V. M., 49-50  
   and atomic energy, 118  
   and Byrnes, 79  
   and Chinese Communists, 62  
   and Truman, 24  
 Monroney, Mike, 147  
 Monsanto Chemical Company, 114  
 Montana, 191  
 Morgenthau, Henry, 225, 258  
   resignation of, 226  
 Morse, Wayne, 137, 149, 169, 185, 191, 208  
 Moscow, conference at, between Truman and Stalin, 21  
   second, 80-81  
   meeting of Foreign Ministers at, bitter fruits of, 35-60  
   resistance of, to Byrnes, on peace treaties, 34  
   (*See also* Soviet Union)  
 Moscow agreement, MacArthur's reaction to, 42  
 Moscow conference (*see* Council of Foreign Ministers; Moscow)  
 Murray, James, 191  
 Myers, Lieutenant Colonel Henry T., 246

## N

National Bureau of Standards, 110  
 National debt (*see* Public debt)  
 National defense, 12  
   need of oil for, 95  
   Truman's views on, 37  
   (*See also* Military training)  
 National Housing Agency, 211  
   divided authority of, 213-214

National Labor Relations Act, 188  
   amendments to, 188-189  
 National Labor Relations Board, 188, 191  
   and Taft-Hartley bill, 192  
 National policy (*see* Policy)  
 National Science Foundation, and atomic bomb, 104  
 National War Labor Board, 127-128, 130, 137  
 Nations, binding agreements between, 35  
 Naturalization rights, equal, 236  
 Navy Day, 1945, 37  
 Near East, diplomatic tangle over, 96  
   oil concessions in, 95  
 Nebraska, 65, 158  
 Negro vote, and Democratic party, 14  
   and racialism, 235  
 Nevada, 232  
 New Deal policies, 10, 145, 183  
   (*See also* Roosevelt programs and policies)  
 New England poultrymen, 222-223  
 New Hampshire, 177, 221  
 New Jersey, 149, 190  
 New Jersey Bell Telephone Company, 114  
 New Mexico, 63, 227, 257  
 New York (state), 5, 13, 74, 130, 147, 177, 191, 235, 256  
 Newburyport, Massachusetts, voluntary price reductions at, 203  
 Nimitz, Admiral, 3, 23  
 Norris-LaGuardia Act, 162  
 North Carolina, 187  
 North Dakota, 193, 232

## O

Oak Ridge, Tennessee, 101, 120  
 O'Daniel, W. Lee, 145  
 Office of Civilian Production, 213  
 Office of Price Administration (OPA), 142-153, 203  
   dying, 55  
   end of, 143, 145, 147

- Office of Price Administration,
    - fight to extend, 148
    - and housing, 214
    - and price-control law, 150
    - weakness of, 142
  - Office of Reconversion, 213
  - Office of Scientific Research and Development, 106, 114
  - Ohio, 13, 75, 124, 130, 152, 170, 196, 227
  - "Ohio Gang," Harding's, 219
  - Oil, tidewater, and Ed Pauley, 220
  - Oil concessions, and national defense, 95
    - Near Eastern, 95
    - Saudi Arabian, 95
  - Okinawa, 3
    - strategic position of, 83
  - Oklahoma, 61, 147
  - OPA (*see* Office of Price Administration)
  - Operation *Coronet*, 4
  - Operation *Olympic*, 4
  - "Operation Rathole" (*see* "Truman Doctrine")
  - Oppenheimer, J. R., 106, 114
  - Oregon, 149, 185, 208
  - Ottawa, 250
- P
- Palestine, admission of Jews to, 94
    - arms embargo on, 235
    - revoking of, 95
  - British mandate over, 94
    - withdrawal of, 94-95
  - foreign policy toward, 94
  - partition of, 94
    - opposition of armed services to, 95
  - Russian intrigue in, 95
  - terrorism in, 94-95
  - threat of civil war in, 95
    - (*See also* Jews; Zionism)
  - Paris, meeting at, to organize against communism, 98
    - (*See also* Council of Foreign Ministers)
  - Patman, Wright, 148
  - Patronage, 225
    - Roosevelt's use of, 12
  - Patterson, Robert, 112, 227
  - Pauley, Ed, 220-221, 258
    - and commodity-market speculation, 224
  - Pay, postwar reduction in, 127
  - Peace, economic, programs for, 139
    - hard, with Germany, 226
    - industrial, 131
  - Marshall's indictment of Russia's threat to, 96-97
    - Vandenberg's attitude toward, 35
    - world, instruments of, 13, 21
    - Truman's part in, 255
  - Peace conference, drafting of peace treaties for, 41-42
    - proposal for, 50
  - Peace treaties, drafting of, 41-42
    - struggles over, 53, 80
    - veto power over, 41-42
  - Pearl Harbor, 10
  - Pearlman, Philip, 232
  - Pearson, Drew, 58
  - Pendergast, Jim, 230, 232
  - Pendergast, Tom, 187, 219
  - Pendergast machine, in Kansas City, 231-232, 256
  - Pennsylvania, 130, 235, 256
  - Pepper, Claude, 86, 149, 191
  - Perkins, Frances, 225
  - Perspective of history, 257
    - and Chinese question, 74
    - Vandenberg's possession of, 35, 257
  - Phelps, Richard K., 232
  - Philippines, 3
    - danger of communism in, 74
  - Pike, Sumner T., 120
  - PM, 58
  - Poland, partition of, 97
    - Soviet policies in, 39-40
  - Policy, American, domestic, 15
    - lack of unanimity on, 130
    - foreign (*see* Foreign policy)
    - labor, 137
    - national, and Congress, 9

- Polish government, establishment of,  
25  
Russian-sponsored (*see* Warsaw  
government)
- Political machines, 256
- Politics, and Federal budget, 186  
international, 192  
intuition of, 249  
and labor, 130, 140, 190  
power, 5  
and presidential appointments,  
220  
and question of civil rights, 237  
and tax reduction, 182, 186-187  
of taxation, 187  
and Truman, 264
- Polls, popularity, on Truman, 164,  
237  
public opinion, on disarmament, 32  
on tax reduction, 184  
(*See also* Gallup Poll; Truman,  
popularity of)
- Poll tax, 236
- Popularity polls (*see* Polls)
- "Portal-to-Portal" suits, nullifying  
of, 171
- Potsdam, Big Three conference at,  
24-28, 33, 262  
inadequacies of, 26  
news of bomb heard by Truman  
at, 27, 102  
weaknesses of arrangements made  
at, 26
- Potsdam agreements, 51, 89-90  
Russian obstruction of, 79  
Russian violation of, 97
- Poultrymen, New England, 222-223
- Power politics (*see* Politics)
- Prefabricated houses, 214-215
- Presidency, and individualism, 253  
line of succession to, 170  
loneliness of, 6  
magnitude of, 254  
nature of, 9  
qualities needed for, 9-10  
(*See also* Executive department;  
Presidents of the United  
States)
- Presidential appointments, challeng-  
ing of, 220  
importance of caliber of, 219
- Presidential campaigns, Dewey's, in  
1944, 250  
Willkie's, in 1940, 13
- Presidents of the United States, ag-  
gressive, 9  
and conduct of foreign affairs, 43  
Congress as handicap to, 9  
history-making, 253  
made by will of God, 10  
as object of pity, 152  
qualities expected of, 238  
qualities needed by, 9-10, 254
- Press, the, 8  
American, representation of, at  
second Moscow conference,  
80-81  
as barometer of Washington, 159  
Communist, 49  
and Congress, 159  
free access for, abroad, 40  
Republican, and foreign trade, 197  
Roosevelt's use of, 16  
Truman's relations with, 107-108,  
166, 239  
and Wallace affair, 58
- Pressman, Lee, 192
- Price ceilings, 143
- Price control, 12, 141-154  
end of, 148  
results of, 148-149  
extension of, 143, 146  
on farm commodities, 144  
and high cost of living, 204-205  
and labor, 152-154  
lack of public support for, 154  
legislation for, 143-146  
on meats, 150-154, 158  
price board to study, 150  
reestablishment of, 151
- OPA policy on, 142  
and wage control, 147
- Price-control bill, 143-147  
new, 148  
vetoing of, 145-147
- Price Decontrol Board, 143, 150, 151



- Price increases, 133, 142
  - Price stabilization (*see* Price control)
  - Prices, 263
    - consumer, 203
    - control of (*see* Price control)
    - effect of foreign relief on, 203-204
    - farm, 168
    - fixing of, 145
    - food, 146
    - housing, 146, 211, 215
    - voluntary reduction of, 203
    - wholesale, 203
      - and decline in commodity markets, 208-209
  - Production, during war effort, 127
    - and price control, 142
  - Profits, postwar, 201, 206
  - Public debt, increased, 177
    - reduction of (*see* Debt reduction)
  - retirement of, 178-179
  - and tax reduction, 178-179, 184
  - Public opinion polls (*see* Gallup Poll; Polls)
- R
- Racial rights, study of, 236
    - (*See also* Civil rights)
  - Radio, 8
    - Roosevelt's use of, 12, 246-247, 254
  - Rankin, John, 14
  - Rationing, gasoline, 127
    - abandoning of, 30
    - meat, 207
  - Rayburn, Sam, 144, 158
    - as chairman, Interstate Commerce Committee, 14
    - loyalty of, to Roosevelt, 14
    - as Majority Leader, 14
    - as Minority Leader, 159
    - and President Truman, 16, 159
    - and Southern Democrats, 159
    - as Speaker, 7, 14, 155, 170, 226
  - Reciprocal trade program, and dairy industry, 196
    - extension of, 22
    - proposed repeal of, 196
  - Reciprocal trade program, restrictions on, 174
  - Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), 120, 214-215
  - Reece, Carroll, 152
  - Reece-Taft-Crawford program, 152, 157
  - Reelfoot Lake, Tennessee, Truman's vacation at, 107-108
  - Reeves, Albert L., 230
  - Refugees (*see* Displaced persons of Europe)
  - Relief, European (*see* European relief)
  - Greek-Turkish, 192, 195
  - international, government buying for, 206
    - and high cost of living, 203
    - mounting burden of, 80
    - uncoordinated, amount of, 82
  - Rent control, 12, 145, 148-149
    - extension of, 173, 202, 208
  - Rents, exorbitant, 210
  - Repatriation of displaced persons, dispute over, 53
  - Republican National Committee, 151
    - slogans of, in 1946, 151-152
  - Republican party, 131
    - and appropriation bills, 185
    - in Congressional elections of 1946, 151
      - commitments in, 158
    - control of Congress by, 155-157
    - and European relief, 206
    - and foreign trade, 197
    - and high cost of living, 201-205
    - and inflation, 206
    - leaders of, 11
    - and Lilienthal's appointment, 124
    - National Chairman of, in 1940, 13
    - and Roosevelt's death, 10, 13
    - split in, in Eightieth Congress, 167
    - and tax reduction, 176-181
    - and third party, 235
    - (*See also* Republicans)
  - Republicans, and appointment of postmasters, 232
  - conservative, 158

- Republicans, and labor, 188-194**  
     and labor legislation, 132  
     liberal, 169  
     and price controls, 141-158  
     and tax reduction, 184  
**RFC** (*see* Reconstruction Finance Corporation)  
**Rhode Island, 15, 233**  
**Rio de Janeiro, 250**  
**Roosevelt, Franklin D., 4, 10, 13, 169, 225, 238, 247, 253**  
     and American people, 6  
     as Assistant Secretary of Navy, 255  
     compared with Truman, 254  
     conversations of, at Yalta conference, 21, 50  
     death of, 3, 20, 157  
     reaction of people to, 6  
     of Republican party to, 10  
     and Republican party hopes, 13  
     and Ed Pauley, 220  
     failure of, to school Truman in confidential matters, 19  
     fireside chats of, 132, 254  
     and housing, 210-211  
     and Hurley, 61  
     influenced by radical fringe, 11  
     and John L. Lewis, 159  
     labor policies of, 14  
     liberal programs of, 128, 155, 157  
     (*See also* Roosevelt programs and policies)  
     and national income, 201  
     as own Secretary of State, 5, 20  
     "personalized" government under, 228  
     as policy-maker for Congress, 16  
     and price controls, 142  
     and purge of 1938, 16  
     and Russia, concessions to, 85-86  
     speeches of, 254  
     campaign, 151-152  
     "economic bill of rights," 210-211  
     last, on Yalta conference, 83  
     and Vandenberg, 35  
     vindictiveness of, 222  
     wartime powers of, 12  
     Roosevelt administration, 133, 256  
     foreign trade program of, 196  
     Roosevelt programs and policies, for  
         lend-lease, 98-99  
         (*See also* Lend-lease)  
     and elections of 1946, 152  
     and Southern Democrats, 14  
     Truman's inheritance of, 128, 155  
**Roosevelt, Theodore, 253**  
**Ross, Charles, 60, 108**  
**Rumania, peace treaty with, 80**  
**Rural electrification, 185**  
**Russia** (*see* Soviet Union)  
**Russian Army, 3**  
     in Manchuria, 28  
**Russian occupation, looting in areas of, 53**

## S

- Sacred Cow (Presidential plane), 246**  
**St. Louis, 152, 161, 166, 226**  
**San Francisco, 23**  
**San Francisco conference, 6, 20**  
     Congressional delegates to, 21  
     opening of, 21-22  
     Stettinius at, 21  
     Truman at, 22  
**Satellites, Axis, peace treaties with, 25, 34**  
     Russian, 40  
     (*See also* Buffer states)  
**Saudi Arabia, 95**  
**Schwellenbach, Lewis B., 134, 225, 228**  
**Scientists, and control of atomic energy, 112**  
     and development of atomic bomb, 105  
     foreign help in, 112  
     and General Groves, 105-106  
     and May-Johnson bill, 106  
**Secret Service, 241**  
**Security Council of United Nations, cooperation of Russia and United States in, 39**  
     and establishment of atomic energy commission, 109

- Security Council of United Nations,  
 haggling disputes in, 78-79  
 paralysis of, by Russia, 96-97  
 referral of Palestine question to, 96  
 and "Truman Doctrine," 86  
 veto power of major powers in,  
 36-37  
 Seizure of mines and plants, wartime,  
 12  
 Selective Service, extension of, 128  
 Service, John, 64-65  
   indictment and exoneration of, 66  
 Sherman Antitrust Act, 173  
 Short, Dewey, 32  
 "Show Me" State (*see* Missouri)  
 Siberia, 83  
 Sioux City, 152  
 Slaughter, Roger C., 230-232  
 Slave-labor camps, Russians in, 53  
 Small, John D., 213-214  
 Smith, Howard W., 14  
 Smith-Connally Act, 189  
 Snyder, John W., 108, 130, 179, 207,  
 213-214, 226  
 Social security benefits, increase of,  
 202  
 South, the, and Henry Wallace, 7  
   revolt of, in 1948, 256  
   and Truman's civil-rights program,  
   237, 256-257  
 South Dakota, 132  
 Sovereign rights, and Soviet policies  
   in Balkans and Poland, 39  
 Soviet Union, aggressive policy of,  
 119  
   and American reporters, 40, 80-81  
   and atomic energy, control of, 79  
   development of, 83  
   experiments in, 116, 118  
   and Chinese Communists, 62, 70-  
   71, 260  
   and Churchill's speech at Fulton,  
   Missouri, 47-49  
   "cold war" with, 96, 100  
   concessions made to, at Yalta, 36-  
   37  
   conciliatory attitude toward, 26,  
   85-86  
 Soviet Union, conciliatory attitude  
   toward, termination of, 79  
   entrance of, into Pacific war, 23-24  
   precipitated by atomic bomb, 27  
   extensive use of veto by, 78, 93  
   for peace treaties, 41-42  
   on vital questions, 79, 93  
   foreign policy of, 86  
   internal situation in, 52-53  
   and Italian colonies in Africa, 81  
   looting of Manchuria by, 42  
   and Marshall's foreign policy, 83,  
   260  
   occupation troops of, in Japan, 78  
   peace treaty negotiations with, 55  
   proposal of, to outlaw atomic  
   bomb, 118  
   questions concerning, at San Fran-  
   cisco conference, 21  
   reactions of, toward Wallace's  
   speech at Madison Square  
   Garden, 59  
   rejection of disarmament treaty  
   by, 49-50  
   removal of troops from Manchu-  
   ria by, 42  
   reparation demands of, 50-51  
   rumors of secret "deals" between  
   Roosevelt and, 21  
   strength of, safeguard against, 37  
   and struggle for control of Medi-  
   terranean, 86  
   suspicion of capitalistic democracy  
   by, 47  
   and Turkey, 81  
   and United Nations, 77-78, 93  
   and United States, 39, 260  
   violations of Potsdam agreement  
   by, 97  
   Wallace's attitude toward, 54  
   and western democracy, 77, 98  
   and World War III, 83  
   (*See also* Moscow; names of  
   Russian leaders)  
 Stalin, and Chinese Communists, 62  
   and Hitler, 97  
   and Hurley, 61-62  
   at Potsdam, 24-27, 34, 229

- Stalin, at Potsdam, and announce-  
 ment of atomic bomb, 27  
 and Roosevelt, 37  
 and Truman, 262  
 at Yalta, 21, 84  
 promise of, to fight Pacific war,  
 23-24  
 Stassen, Harold E., 224  
 State Department (*see* United States  
 Department of State)  
 Statistics, cost-of-living, 211  
 Steelman, John R., 134-135  
 Stettinius, Edward R., Jr., as Secre-  
 tary of State, 20-21, 45  
   resignation of, 23  
   at San Francisco conference, 21  
   and Vandenberg, 35  
 Stillwell, General "Vinegar Joe,"  
   and Hurley, 61, 64  
   recall of, 62  
 Stimson, Henry L., 227  
   and atomic bomb, as chairman of  
   committee to formulate legis-  
   lation on, 103  
   memorandum on, 102  
 Stone, Harlan F., 3, 164  
 Stratton, William G., 171  
 Strauss, Lewis L., 120  
 Strikes, buyers', 150  
   coal, during war, 159  
   in early 1920's, 160  
   prevention of, in 1946, 160, 164  
   Supreme Court decision on,  
   163  
   in major industries, 133  
   man-days of labor lost by, 130  
   maritime, 55  
   mediation machinery for, 134  
   and national economy, 190  
   New York teamsters', 55  
   postwar, 127  
   railroad, 133-137  
     against government, 132, 162  
     settlement of, 134-137  
     Truman's ultimatum on, 134-135  
   and Smith-Connally Act, 189  
   wage, 141  
   wildcat, 193
- Strikes  
   (*See also* Labor; Labor disputes;  
   Labor-management relations)  
 Subsidies, for housing program, 212-  
   213  
   wartime, 12  
   food, reduction of, 143-144  
 Succession Act of 1886, 170  
 Supply and demand, 142  
 Supreme Court of the United States,  
   162-165  
   (*See also* United States Depart-  
   ment of Justice)  
 Sweden, atomic energy experiments  
   in, 116  
 Swiss government, Japanese surren-  
   der negotiations through, 28-29  
 Szilard, Leo, 112
- T
- Tabor, John, 13, 158, 177, 185  
 Taft, Robert A., 13, 138, 152, 209  
   and aid to China, 75  
   as chairman of Senate Labor Com-  
   mittee, 169, 190-191  
   after elections of 1946, 158  
   and Federal budget of 1948, 177  
   and foreign relief, 203  
   and high cost of living, 203  
   and isolationism, 13  
   and liberal Republicans, 169  
   and organized labor, 250  
   as presidential candidate, 237, 250  
   and price controls, 145-149, 203-  
   204, 206  
   and Taft-Hartley bill, 190-193  
   radio broadcast on, 193  
   and tax reduction, 180  
   and Truman, 13  
   and universal military training, 173  
 Taft-Hartley bill, attitude of labor  
   toward, 191-193  
   and international politics, 191  
   toughness of, 191  
 Taft-Reece-Crawford program (*see*  
   Reece-Taft-Crawford program)  
 Tariff, high, 197, 161

- Tariff, reduction of, by Seventy-ninth Congress, 196
  - and the press, 197
  - revisions of, 196
- Tax benefits, 176
- Tax bills, passed under gag rule, 182
- Republican, 182
- Tax reduction, 158, 174, 204
  - "across-the-board," 178-179
  - and business, 181
  - for corporations, 175-176
  - and higher income brackets, 181
  - for individuals, 176
  - and politics, 182
  - postponement of, 183
  - and public debt, 178-179, 184
  - taxpayers' attitude toward, 175, 184
  - warning against, for 1947, 181
- Tax reduction bills, vetoing of, 175-184, 261
- Tax structure, necessity for revision of, 179
- Taxation, theories of, 181-182
- Taxpayer, American, and tax reduction, 175
- Taylor, Glen, 86, 173
- Teheran conference, and Chinese policy, 70
- Tennessee, 120
- Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), 114, 120-121
- Texas, 66, 145, 148, 158, 159, 170, 226, 230
- Thomas, Charles Allen, 114
- Thomas, Elbert, 191
- Third party, threat of, 191, 234-235, 237, 256-257
- Tideland oil reserves, exploitation of, 220
  - title to, 220-221
  - bill for, 223
- TNT, compared with atomic bomb, 27
- Tobey, Charles W., 169, 221-223
- Tokyo Bay, 30
- Trade, export, 206
  - foreign, 195-200, 261
  - reciprocal (*see* Reciprocal trade)
- Trade agreements, international conference on, 196
  - preliminary discussions for, 198
- Trade program, reciprocal (*see* Reciprocal trade)
- Transportation services, 149
- Trieste (*see* Italian Trieste)
- Truman, Harry S., birthday of, 23
  - businesslike quality of, 31
  - character and personality of, 3, 7, 13, 244-245, 249
  - warmth of, 240
  - courage and acumen of, 77, 264
  - family life of, 241-245
  - gregariousness of, 239
  - as head of Democratic party, 201
  - fumbling of, 235
  - health of, 241-242, 248
  - humility of, 8, 12
  - handicap of, 8
  - as judge, in Missouri, 240
  - modesty of, 238, 247
  - preparation of, for Presidency, 255
  - psychological, 7-8
  - as President, addresses and speeches
    - of, in Brazil, to Brazilian Congress, 252
    - to Inter-American conference, 251
    - to Canadian Parliament, 248-249
    - at close of San Francisco conference, 22
    - to Congress, on civil rights, 236
    - on control of atomic energy, 103-104
    - on Greek-Turkish relief, 243
    - on high cost of living, 202
    - in January, 1947, 167-168
    - before Moscow conference of 1947, 84-87
    - in 1945, 16, 128
    - on railroad strike, 135-137
    - "State of the Union," 180-181, 189, 208, 234
    - on tax reduction, 182-184

- Truman, Harry S., as President, addresses and speeches of, to Congress, on vetoes, of Case bill, 138-139  
 of price-control legislation, 145-146  
 to Federal Council of Churches, 82  
 on Navy Day, 1945, 37-38, 43  
 at opening of San Francisco conference, 22  
 to people, in January, 1946, 131  
 preceding conference of labor and industry, 128-129  
 on price control, 146, 152-154  
 on railroad strike, 134-135  
 on V-J Day, 30  
 and air travel, 244, 246  
 as ambassador of good will, 262  
 and American prestige, 252  
 in Brazil, 250-252  
 nicknamed "Mr. Missouri," 251-252, 264  
 in Canada, 248-249  
 in Mexico, 247-248  
 appointments made by, 220, 261  
 Republican objections to, 232-233  
 associates of, patchwork character of, 219-256  
 incompetence of, 234  
 and atomic bomb, 27, 30, 101  
 agreement with Atlee concerning, 108-109  
 appointment of commission on, 117, 120-124  
 refusal to compromise on, 124  
 first official news of, 102  
 frankness to reporters concerning, 108  
 justification of use of, 102  
 program for control of, 103-104, 124  
 reassurances to world on, 107  
 signing of law on, 118  
 silence on, 116
- Truman, Harry S., as President, at Big Three conference at Potsdam, 24-27, 31  
 hasty departure from, 27-28  
 instructive policy of, 27  
 in role of peacemaker between Churchill and Russians, 24-26, 229  
 proposals of, 25  
 report to nation after, 24-25  
 and Byrnes, 20-21, 34, 41, 58-60  
 lack of liaison between, during Moscow conference, 43  
 teamwork needed between, 44  
 tension between, 44, 79  
 and Case bill, 132, 137-138  
 vetoing of, 138-139, 157, 190, 261  
 and civil-rights legislation, 236  
 and Clark Clifford, 161, 166  
 and communism, 259  
 and conduct of foreign affairs, 19, 44, 50, 56-57, 259-260, 263  
 and conference of labor and industry, 129  
 and Congress, 11, 260-261  
 cooperation between, increased, 155, 159  
 lack of, 16  
 efforts at friendship between, 16  
 Eightieth, 165-174  
 conflict between, 174  
 and foreign trade, 195-199  
 maneuvering in, 195  
 program for, 168-174, 201  
 and controls, price, 141-158, 206-209, 261  
 bill for, vetoing of, 145-147, 204  
 gamble of, 148  
 public reaction to, 155-158  
 second bill for, 149-150  
 rent, 145, 148, 149, 173, 202, 208  
 council of economic advisers of, 201-202, 211  
 denunciation of military aggression by, 39  
 difficulties of, 259

- Truman, Harry S., as President, difficulties of, early, 130  
 early desperation of, 19  
 and Ed Pauley, 220-223  
 encouragement needed by, in beginning, 11  
 European relief program of, 206  
 for Greece and Turkey, 86, 93  
 evaluation of, 253-264  
   by American people, 264  
   in march of history, 254-255  
   and Federal budget, 185  
   and foreign diplomacy, 5  
   Roosevelt pattern of, 19  
   and foreign trade, 196-259  
   Roosevelt program of, 196  
   Vandenberg-Millikin formula for, 198-199  
   vetoing of, 199  
 at Fulton, Missouri, during Churchill's speech, 47-48  
 growth of, in office, 166, 262-263  
 and high cost of living, 201-209  
 program of, to remedy, 206-209  
 and housing situation, 173, 210-215  
   program for, 212-215  
   failure of, 215, 262  
   importance of, 215  
 and Hurley, 61-65  
 and Ickes, 221-222  
 increased self-confidence of, 166, 168  
 independence of, after elections of 1946, 155, 168, 185-186  
 ineptitude and errors of, 57, 243, 262-264  
 and international peace, 78, 259  
 and John L. Lewis, 159-160, 261  
 liberal course of, 174, 264  
 and Marshall, 67-75, 79-100, 263  
 and Moscow conference, 43-44  
 in 1946, 131  
 and 1948 election, 249-250, 256-258, 264  
 as object of pity, 152-153, 164  
 and organized labor, 127-140, 189-194, 261
- Truman, Harry S., as President, and organized labor, political support of, 191  
 in own right, 44  
 and peace conference, 50  
 popularity of, 9  
   after Case bill veto, 140  
   in Congressional elections of 1946, 151-152, 154-156  
   in Gallup Poll of 1945, 11  
   in 1948, 237, 256  
   rock bottom, 157  
   after settlement of coal strike, 163-165  
   at time of Japan's surrender, 30  
 postwar domestic problems of, 55-58  
 and press, 241, 244-245  
   frankness of, 107-108  
 reestablishment of Cabinet form of government by, 40  
 and Roosevelt's programs, 128  
 and Russians, 24, 34, 54, 262  
 and Southern Democrats, 14, 237  
 and surrender of Japan, 28-30  
 and Taft-Hartley bill, vetoing of, 191-194  
 and tax reduction, 175-186, 192, 261  
 and United Nations, 21-22, 78, 259, 263  
   ratification of charter of, 21, 259  
 and universal military training, 171-172  
 vetoing of tideland oil title bill by, 223  
 and Wallace, 54-60, 77  
 on the *Williamsburg*, 243  
   after Moscow conference, 43-44  
 and world leadership, 6, 263  
 and World War II, 142-143, 254, 258  
 as public speaker, 246-247  
 improvement in, 167  
 in Senate, 19, 133, 171, 225-226, 238, 255

- Truman, Harry S., in Senate, as chairman of National Defense Investigating Committee, 4, 19, 159, 219, 255  
 and atomic energy, 101  
 and John L. Lewis, 259  
 and shortage of lumber, 214  
 and shock of Roosevelt's death, 3  
 stubbornness of, 223  
 as student of history, 19  
 and Taft, 13  
 as Vice-president, 238  
 at Cabinet meetings, *ex officio*, 5, 19  
 problems and responsibilities of, 5  
 as vice-presidential candidate, 4  
 nomination of, 226  
 Roosevelt's choice of, 255  
 and World War I, 19, 240  
 (*See also* Truman administration)
- Truman, Bess (Mrs. Harry S.), 241-242, 246, 251
- Truman, Margaret, 241, 251
- Truman, Martha (Mrs.), 244, 246
- Truman administration, 49  
 battle for life of, 159  
 beginning of trouble for, 32  
 calculated risks taken by, 92, 100  
 canceling of war appropriations by, 175  
 cooperation of, with Republican party, 77, 130  
 and decline of commodity markets, 208-209  
 division of, over coal strike, 161  
 early success of, 28  
 evaluation of, 258-262  
 experiments of, in 1946, 131  
 and foreign aid, to China, 75-76, 260  
 to Europe, 33, 99-100  
 foreign policy of, 195-196  
 toward China, 260  
 on Palestine, 94-95  
 toward Russia, 79-87, 96  
 and foreign trade, 197  
 and Fred M. Vinson, 164
- Truman Administration, and high cost of living, 201-209  
 and Hurley's resignation, 65  
 and Ickes, 222  
 and labor, 133-140, 195, 205-206  
 and Lewis, John L., 160-161  
 mistakes of, early, affecting housing, 212-216  
 in 1948, 234  
 political quarrels within, 54, 233-234  
 postwar domestic problems of, 55-58  
 policy on, 130  
 and price control, 145, 204-205  
 as representative of government, 77  
 on the skids, 140  
 and tax reduction, 179-180  
 and wage strikes, 142, 193
- Truman Committee, 4, 19, 159, 219, 255
- "Truman Doctrine," 263  
 inadequacy of, 86-88, 91, 94  
 new concept of, 90  
 supplanted by Marshall Plan, 91  
 and United Nations, 86-87  
 uproar caused by, 86  
 (*See also* Marshall Plan)
- Turkey, aid to, 86, 91, 93  
 communism in, 83  
 and Greece, 82-83  
 Russian demands on, 81  
 strategic position of, 83  
 untenable position of, 81
- TVA (*see* Tennessee Valley Authority)
- Tydings, Millard F., 15, 78, 116, 221, 224

## U

- Ukraine, 36
- Unemployment compensation program, Truman's, defeat of, 128
- Unemployment insurance, 141
- Unions (*see* Labor unions)
- United Automobile Workers, and General Motors, 129



- United Nations, and atomic energy, 58, 109, 113, 124
  - committee of, to study, 113-114
  - (*See also* United Nations Commission)
  - drafting of Charter for, 22
  - and Greek crisis, 94
  - meeting of, in London, 47
  - relief agencies of, 33
  - Russia's attitude toward, 77-78, 93
  - Security Council of (*see* Security Council of United Nations)
  - Truman's attitude toward, 21-22, 259, 263
- United Nations Assembly, 263
  - first, in 1946, 45-46
  - Marshall's indictment of Russia in, 96-97
  - and Palestine, 94-95
  - Russian votes in, 23, 36
  - and "Truman Doctrine," 87
- United Nations Charter, 33, 264
  - initial drafts of, 6
  - ratification of, 22-23, 78, 259
  - signing of, at San Francisco conference, 22
  - at White House, 28
- United Nations Commission, to study atomic energy, 42
- United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, and aid to Europe, 33
  - misuse of, 80
  - termination of, 80
  - appropriations for, 22
- United Nations Trusteeship Council, 50, 81
- United States, 28, 257
  - and control of atomic energy, 101-124
  - economic leadership of, 200
  - foreign policy of, 34, 39
  - Far Eastern, 61-76
  - international responsibilities of, 176-177, 183
  - and lend-lease, 99
  - and Near Eastern oil, 95
  - and peace treaties, 41-42
- United States, and Russia, 39, 260
  - security of, and communism, 82, 192
  - taxes and expenditures of, 176
  - and United Nations, 263
  - Vishinsky's attack on, 97
- United States Army, 3
  - and Chinese government, 67
  - and control of atomic energy, 111-112
  - occupation, 32
  - reduction of, after V-J Day, 32-33
  - retention of strong, 32
- United States Department of Agriculture, and price control, 144
- United States Department of Commerce, 133
  - Mediation Board, 138
  - and Taft-Hartley bill, 192
- United States Department of Justice,
  - Division of Civil Rights, 236
  - and Ed Pauley, 220-221
  - and Taft-Hartley bill, 192
  - War Frauds Division, 226
  - (*See also* Supreme Court)
- United States Department of Labor, and Taft-Hartley bill, 192
- United States Department of State,
  - 29
  - and China, 63-65
  - cooperation of, with Vandenberg, 52
  - Far Eastern Division, 65-66, 68
  - and foreign trade, 197-198
  - investigation of communism in, 65
  - lack of harmony between, and Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, 45
  - and partition of Palestine, 95-96
- United States Employment Service, 128
- United States House of Representatives, and Case bill, 132, 137-140
  - Agricultural Committee, and price support for wool industry, 198
  - Appropriations Committee, 158, 177, 185
  - Armed Services Committee, 173

- United States House of Representatives, and extension of OPA, 148  
 Foreign Affairs Committee, survey of Chinese affairs under, 74  
 and foreign trade, 196-200  
 investigation of National Labor Relations Board by, 188  
 Labor Committee, 132, 190  
 Military Affairs Committee, and control of atomic energy, 104-105  
   hearings on, 105-106  
   and demobilization, 32  
 and President Truman, 11, 136-137  
 and price controls, 147-154, 204  
   sustaining of veto for, 148  
 and price-support bill, 200  
 and reduction of public debt, 178  
 relief appropriations of, 40  
 Republicans in, after 1946, 155-156  
   at Roosevelt's death, 13  
 Rules Committee, 132, 230  
 and Taft-Hartley bill, 188-195  
 and tax reduction, 178, 182-184  
 Truman's address in, preceding Moscow conference, 84-85  
 Un-American Activities Committee, 89  
 Ways and Means Committee, and foreign trade, 196  
   and tax hearings, 178  
 United States Navy, and control of atomic energy, 111-112  
   oil reserves of, 220  
   reduction of, after V-J Day, 33  
 United States Senate, Appropriations Committee, inquiry of, into commodity market speculations, 224-225  
   and Wedemeyer report on China, 74-75  
 Armed Services Committee, 169  
 Banking and Currency Committee, 169  
 Bill 814, passage of, 198, 261  
   foreign policy of, 41  
 United States Senate, Foreign Relations Committee, 5, 169  
   and control of atomic energy, 104-105  
   cooperation of Byrnes with, 49  
   and European recovery program, 99  
   and Hurley, 65-67  
   lack of harmony between, and State Department, 45  
   and foreign trade, 196-200  
   jealousies in, 109  
   Labor Committee, 132, 138, 169  
     split in, 190  
   and labor legislation, 138-140, 188-195  
   Military Affairs Committee, and atomic bomb, 104-105  
   and demobilization, 32  
   National Affairs Committee, 4, 19, 101, 159  
   National Defense Investigating Committee, 4, 19, 159, 119, 255  
   Naval Affairs Committee, 211  
   and President Truman, 11  
   and presidential appointments, 220-221  
   and price controls, 144-149, 204  
   price-support bill of, 200  
   quenching of isolationism in, 51  
   ratification of United Nations Charter by, 22, 78  
   and reduction of public debt, 178  
   Republican majority in, 7  
   Republican Policy Committee, study of Wallace by, 55-56  
   settlement of conflicts in, 19  
   and showdown on Russia, 78  
   Special Atomic Energy Committee, 109-110, 116  
     and military controls, 117  
     and tax reduction, 180-187  
 University of Chicago, 112  
   atomic experiment projects at, 110  
 Utah, 191

## V

- Vandenberg, Arthur, 13, 34  
 and atomic energy control, 109, 121  
 and Byrnes, 45, 49, 52  
 defense of Lilienthal by, 124  
 and drafting of United Nations Charter, 36  
 and European aid, 96, 100  
 evaluation of, 35  
 and foreign policy, 35-36, 39, 41, 49, 86-87, 158, 195  
   nonpartisan approach to, 257-258  
 and foreign trade, 196-198  
 growing influence of, 35-36, 41  
 and international relations, 35, 39, 52, 78  
 as leader of isolationism, 35  
 and Moscow agreements, 42  
   misgivings about, 45  
 as number one opponent of Molotov, 49  
 as party foreign policy leader, 233  
 and peace negotiations, 50, 55  
 and perspective of history, 35, 257  
 and proposal of international disarmament treaty, 49-50  
 report to Senate by, on London conference, 45-46  
 and results of London Foreign Ministers meeting, 37  
 stabilizing influence of, on Russian question, 79  
 and United Nations, 78  
   London meeting of, 47  
 and Wallace, 57-60  
 Vandenberg-Millikin formula for foreign trade, 197-199  
 House-Senate conference on, 199  
 Vardeman, Commodore James K., 29  
 Vaughan, Major General Harry H., 229  
 V-E Day, 29  
 Vermont, 13, 169, 185, 207  
 Veterans, claims of, 177  
 Veterans, terminal leave bonds of, cashing of, 186-187  
 Vice-presidency, 9  
   lack of authority of, 5  
 Vincent, John Carter, 66, 68  
 Vinson, Fred M., 164  
   as Chief Justice, 226, 258  
   as Secretary of Treasury, 226  
 Virginia, 14-15, 78, 111, 120, 184  
 Vishinsky, Andrei Y., 97  
 V-J Day, 147  
   canceling of war contracts after, 175  
   layoffs following, 127  
   official, 30-32  
 Vorys, John M., 75

## W

- Wade, Benjamin, 170  
 Wage and Hour Act, 171  
 Wage increases, 133  
   for railroad workers, 133-136  
   under Truman administration, 205  
 Wage settlement, 133  
 Wages (*see* Pay)  
 Wagner Labor Relations Act (*see* National Labor Relations Act)  
 Wallace, Henry, 7, 86, 255  
   and Baruch, 119  
   European tour of, 88-89  
   idealism of, 89  
   and Roosevelt administration, 88  
   and Russia, 54, 56, 88-89, 91  
   as Secretary of Commerce, 54  
   appointment of, 220  
   resignation of, 59-60  
   speech of, at Madison Square Garden, 56-57  
   authorization of, by Truman, 56  
   reaction of, at Paris conference, 57-58  
   in world at large, 59  
   State Department objection to, 56  
   and United States foreign policy, 56, 58, 88-89

- Wallace, Henry, speech of, in Washington, on "Truman Doctrine," 88-89  
 and third party, 191, 234-235, 237, 256-257  
 and United States atomic policy, 55, 58  
 as Vice-president, 14, 54  
 Walter Reed Hospital, 243  
 War contracts, canceling of, 127  
 War and Navy Departments, merging of, 170, 227  
 War surpluses, 128  
   foreign liquidation of, 235  
 Warfare, economic, 199  
   global, 4  
 Warsaw government, Russia's insistence on, 25, 36, 39-40  
 Wartime regulations and restrictions, relaxing of, 30, 127  
 Washington, D.C., 24, 41, 80, 114  
   and John L. Lewis, 163  
   news corps in, 158-159  
   postwar confusion in, 128  
   and railroad strike, 135  
   rumors in, about secret "deals" with Moscow, 21, 37  
   Wallace's speech in, denouncing "Truman Doctrine," 88-89  
 Washington, George, 253  
 Washington (state), 65  
 Washington agreement, on establishment of Atomic Energy Commission, 108-109  
 Waymack, William Wesley, 120  
 Wear, Sam, 230  
 Wedemeyer, Lieutenant General Albert C., 70-71  
   report of, on China, 74-75  
   suppression of, by Marshall, 74-75  
 West Virginia, 149  
 Western Hemisphere, defense of, 251  
 Westminster College, degree from, bestowed on Churchill, 47  
 Wherry, Kenneth, 65, 145, 149, 158  
 White House, 5-6, 102  
   complex duties of, 253  
 White House, conference in, on price-control bill, 144-145  
   defeatism in, 152  
   effect of, on Presidents, 246  
   liaison between, and State Department, 40  
   limited tenure in, 169  
   during Moscow conference, 43-44  
   and politics, 253  
   and the press, 158-159  
   signing of United Nations Charter in, 28  
   during surrender of Japan, 29  
   Truman in, 10, 21, 40, 130, 220, 240-243  
 White Russia, 36  
 Whitney, A. F., 134, 137  
 Wickard, Claude, 227  
 Wiley, Alexander, 232  
 Williamsburg (Presidential yacht), 43-44, 243  
 Willkie, Wendell, 13  
 Wilson, Woodrow, on inflation, 201  
   defeat of peace policies of, 36  
 Windsor, Duke of, 29  
 Winne, Harry A., 114  
 Wisconsin, 232  
 Wolcott, Representative, 147  
 Wool, Australian and New Zealand, 198  
   import fee on, 198  
   (See also Industry, wool)  
 Work week, forty-eight hour, 127  
 World leadership, 6  
 World War I, 20, 255  
   and economic isolationism, 200  
   Truman in, 19, 240  
 World War II, in Europe, 3  
   in Pacific, 3, 23  
   termination of, 108  
   preparation for, 12  
   urgency of, at time of Roosevelt's death, 11  
   winning of, 142-143, 254, 258  
   and world trade, 199  
 World War III, 81, 83  
   and atomic bomb, 116  
 Wyatt, Wilson, 212-215

Wyatt, Wilson, frustration of, 215  
 and prefabricated houses, 214  
 program of, 213  
 resignation of, 215

## Y

Yalta conference, 36  
 agreements made at, 36-37, 39, 50-

51

Byrnes's notes on, 21, 51  
 and Chinese policy, 70  
 Roosevelt and Stalin at, 23, 84

Young, Milton, 193  
 "Young Turks," 225  
 Yugoslavia, 50  
 Communist International Brigade  
 in, 93  
 invasion of Greece by, 81, 94

## Z

Zhukov, Marshal, Truman's liking  
 for, 24  
 Zionism, in United States, 94

